

ילקוט בר מצווה

Yalkut Bar Mitzvah

AN ANTHOLOGY
OF LAWS AND CUSTOMS
OF A BAR MITZVAH
IN THE CHABAD TRADITION

by
Rabbi Nissan Dovid Dubov



Sichos In English
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YALKUT BAR MITZVAH

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PUBLISHER'S FOREWORD

The time of Bar Mitzvah is one of the most richly celebrated passages in a lifetime. Little wonder, then, that in the works of the Rebbeim of Chabad there is a considerable repository of teachings and customs relating to it.

As the big day looms up on the calendar, *Yalkut Bar Mitzvah* will quietly guide every *bar mitzvah* boy and his parents in their preparations. It includes a summary of the laws concerning *tefillin*; talks and writings of the Rebbeim; and descriptions of their own Bar Mitzvah celebrations. (All these items, by the way, add up to a goldmine of speech material.)

A particularly welcome feature is the translation of the discourse which Lubavitcher Bar Mitzvah boys traditionally recite — the *maamar* that begins with the words, *Issa B'Midrash Tehillim*. In order to make this discourse accessible and meaningful, the present English edition furnishes it with explanatory notes. In this way and in others, this anthology will light up every Bar Mitzvah celebration with the warmth of *Chassidus*.

It is our fervent hope that as his great day arrives, every *bar mitzvah* boy in turn will accept the yoke of the *mitzvos* enthusiastically, by drinking thirstily of the wellsprings of *Chassidus*. For, as *Mashiach* told the Baal Shem Tov, it is these refreshing waters that will hasten the coming of *Mashiach* — *now*.

Sichos In English

20 Menachem Av, 5759

Chapter 1

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF A BAR MITZVAH

The time of Bar Mitzvah is a richly celebrated passage of life. Presented here is a brief selection of the Rebbe's writings describing the significance of a Bar Mitzvah as illuminated in the Chabad tradition.

1. THE DAY ON WHICH THE *YETZER TOV* ENTERS

The main entry of the holy soul in man is at the age of 13 years and one day (and the age of 12 for a female), for it is at this age that they are biblically obligated to keep the commandments and that they become liable to punishment for their sins. — Shulchan Aruch HaRav

The *Midrash*¹ states that it is on the day of the Bar Mitzvah that the *Yetzer Tov* is united with the person. The Alter Rebbe² amplifies this notion by explaining that although the G-dly soul has entered with the circumcision, and continues to be manifest throughout the years of education, it enters in the most complete manner only on the occasion of Bar Mitzvah. It is from this point on that the Jew is able to wage war with his *Yetzer Hara* and set out to conquer the small city³ — the body.⁴ How is it possible to be victorious in this battle? The Sages⁵ have given the answer — “G-d created the *Yetzer Hara* and He created the Torah as an antidote.”⁶

Accordingly, the *Yetzer Hara* really has first claim over the body for he entered the body first. He claims he is the firstborn!

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1. *Koheles Rabbah* 4:13.
 2. *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim, Mahadura Kamma* 4 (end). See *Tehillim Yahel Or of Tzemach Tzedek*, ch. 2:7 (p. 11).
 3. See *Tanya*, ch. 9.
 4. *Nedarim* 32b. See commentary of *Rosh, ibid.*
 5. *Bava Basra* 16a.
 6. *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. I, p. 151.

In order to free oneself of the *yetzer*, one must for a certain period separate oneself from the outside world, and totally confine oneself within the four cubits of a *shul*, a *Yeshiva* or *Beis HaMidrash* and warm oneself with the love of *Hashem*, the love of Torah and the love of a fellow Jew.⁷

When a boy becomes Bar Mitzvah he accepts upon himself “*ol mitzvos*” the yoke of *mitzvos*. The word “*ol*” is chosen because it denotes a form of acceptance that transcends all reason and rationale. Only such an acceptance of *mitzvos* will endure.⁸

2. THE BAR MITZVAH *SIMCHAH*

“*On that day (the day of Bar Mitzvah), it is an obligation on the righteous to make a simchah similar to that on the day of a wedding.*”⁹

There are four aspects to the *simchah* of the Bar Mitzvah.

1. The *simchah* of the boy — that he has reached the age of obligation of *mitzvos*. This is of great merit, as the *Mishnah* states, “Rabbi Chananiah ben Akashia says: The Holy One Blessed be He, wished to confer merit upon Israel; therefore He gave them Torah and *mitzvos* in abundance.”

2. The family *simchah* — of the parents, grandparents, brothers and sisters — having the merit of raising the boy and in turn them seeing true *Yiddishe Nachas* from him.

3. The *simchah* of the Jewish people — at having yet another fully obligated Jew join their ranks.

4. The *simchah* of *Hashem* — since every single Jew is a child of G-d, as it states, “My son, My firstborn, Israel,” it follows that when there is a *simchah* relating to an individual, a

7. *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 303

8. *Ibid.*, Vol. XII, p. 228.

9. *Zohar Chadosh, Bereishis* 15:4. See also 10:3,4 *ibid.*, and *Zohar*, Vol. II, p. 98a. See *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. XVI, p. 103.

The *Zohar* continues: “R. Shimon Bar Yochai invited the leading scholars of the *Mishnah* to partake of a great festive meal which he had arranged... He was very happy... because (as he explained), “On this day, a holy and exalted soul descended... into my son R. Elazar, and on this joyous occasion, I shall experience supreme joy.”

family or the entire Jewish people, this brings immense joy to their Father in Heaven — to G-d.¹⁰

This extra dimension of the *simchah* of G-d in return adds in G-d's blessings to all Israel, and in particular to the one that was the cause of the *simchah* — the Bar Mitzvah boy himself.¹¹ All Jews are dependent on each other. It follows therefore that all Jews should rejoice in this *simchah*, for when another worker is added to the team, the workload is lightened and the workers rejoice. So too, the *simchah* of a Bar Mitzvah lies in the fact that another worker has been recruited to the ranks of the workforce.¹² It is interesting to note that in Hebrew, the “age of *mitzvos*” is called “*gil mitzvos*” and the word “*gil*” is associated with the word “*gilah*” meaning rejoicing and happiness.

3. THE TRUE BIRTHDAY OF A JEW

The day of the Bar Mitzvah signals the transition of the boy from a state where he is obligated only for reasons of education to keep the *mitzvos* into a state where he is fully obligated to keep the *mitzvos*. In this sense the day of the Bar Mitzvah is his true birthday, the day on which he becomes a true emissary of G-d charged with fulfilling the commandments.¹³ The word *mitzvah* in addition to meaning a commandment also has the meaning “connection.” It therefore follows that on the day of Bar Mitzvah, a true connection with G-d has been established.¹⁴

It follows, since the boy is now obligated to keep the *mitzvos*, and “G-d does not make unreasonable demands of His creations”, that he must have been given all the powers necessary to fulfil his obligation. This thought should strengthen the boy, in the knowledge that nothing can prevent him from keeping *Hashem's mitzvos* — he has only to summon up the will to do so.¹⁵

10. *Yechidus*, 15 Tammuz 5745.

11. *Ibid.*

12. *Sichah of Shabbos Parshas Vayakhel Pekudei* 5715.

13. *Yechidus*, 16 Tammuz 5747.

14. *Yechidus*, 19 Adar 5745.

15. *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. XVIII, p. 12.

4. “MATTAN TORAH” — THE GIVING OF THE TORAH

The day of Bar Mitzvah can be considered an individual's “*Mattan Torah*,”¹⁶ the day on which G-d fully entrusts and empowers him to keep the *mitzvos*. The obligation to keep *mitzvos* comes with the power enabling him to keep the *mitzvos* — if he has been commanded to keep them, he surely must have the ability and potential to keep them.¹⁷ This includes doing the *mitzvos* with joy and gladness of heart. Following the principle that “one mitzvah draws another,” the day of Bar Mitzvah is the first day of keeping *mitzvos* which will draw other *mitzvos* ad infinitum. It can therefore be seen as the first in a long chain of *mitzvos* — the beginning of an endless process.¹⁸

5. AN ADDITIONAL MEMBER OF *KLAL YISRAEL*

On the day of Bar Mitzvah the boy joins the ranks of *Klal Yisrael*. Especially in light of the ruling of the *Rambam*, that each additional thought speech and action can sway the scales of merit and bring salvation and deliverance, it follows that each additional Bar Mitzvah, with its accompanying *mitzvos*, sways the scales of merit for the Bar Mitzvah boy and indeed for *Klal Yisrael* and the whole world.¹⁹

It should be noted that the number 13 is numerically equivalent to the word “*echad*” (אחד) one. This demonstrates that at the age of Bar Mitzvah, the boy becomes one with his people, united in their *shlichus* of making the world a *Dirah b'tachtonim*, an abode for the Divine.²⁰

16. *Yechidus*, 24 Nissan 5747; 17 Shvat 5742. The individual's *Mattan Torah* also speedens the giving of the Torah in time to come, when “a new Torah will come forth from Me” in the days of *Mashiach* — see *Yechidus*, 11 Sivan 5750.

17. See *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. XVIII, p. 12

18. *Yechidus*, 24 Nissan 5747.

19. *Yechidus*, 2 Cheshvan 5752.

20. *Yechidus*, 20 Adar 5751. See also *Yechidus*, 20 Kislev 5752. In *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. XX, p. 578, the Rebbe adds that this additional unity in the Jewish people and in Torah also brings to “*Shleimus Ha'aretz*” the entirety of *Eretz Yisrael*.

This unity is further demonstrated by the fact that, at the age of Bar Mitzvah, the boy may be counted as a member of the *minyan* in order to create a holy congregation.²¹

6. THE DEDICATION OF A NEW SANCTUARY

“Make for Me a Sanctuary so that I may dwell among them,”²² — in each one of them.²³ The heart of each Jew constitutes an inner sanctuary. The dedication of this sanctuary takes place on the day of Bar Mitzvah, when he becomes obligated to keep all the *mitzvos*. It follows therefore that on this day there is an extra flow of blessing from G-d — similar to the additional sacrifices that accompanied the dedication of the Tabernacle and the Temple.²⁴

7. A NEW MAZAL

The day of Bar Mitzvah signals a change in the mode of learning and mitzvah performance. It follows that the reward received from G-d is also of another order and that the boy receives new powers, both physically and spiritually.²⁵ In fact, he receives a new *mazal* on this day.²⁶

8. ILLUMINATING THE DARKNESS

A Bar Mitzvah boy must always have in mind that:

a) G-d created the heavens and earth and is therefore the one and only *baal habayis* over the world.

b) The portion of the world granted to each person rests in a state of darkness and it is the responsibility of the individual to illuminate it and change it for the good.

c) The first stage in *avodah* is the recognition that through learning Torah (which is the word of G-d as repeatedly

21. *Yechidus*, 15 Tammuz 5746.

22. *Shmos* 25:9.

23. See *Maamar Basi LeGani* 5710.

24. *Yechidus*, 13 Shvat 5746.

25. *Yechidus*, 25 Tishrei 5750.

26. *Ibid.*

emphasized in the Torah by the phrase “And G-d said...”), and keeping *mitzvos*, (which are the will of G-d) one may illuminate the world, as the verse states “a *mitzvah* is the candle and Torah light.”

In this way he can turn darkness into light, as in the words of the *Zohar*, “to turn darkness into light and bitterness into sweetness.”

Keeping these thoughts to the forefront of his mind will help to ensure that the Bar Mitzvah boy walks in G-d’s ways and does righteousness and justice.

9. AHAVAS YISRAEL

Since the *mitzvah* of *Ahavas Yisrael* is a great principle of the Torah, it follows that on the day of Bar Mitzvah, the day one becomes obligated to keep the *mitzvos*, and particularly the principle *mitzvah*, there accordingly has to be a special emphasis on the *mitzvah* of *Ahavas Yisrael*.²⁷

What definitely gives G-d much joy is the spectacle of a Jew who has just become Bar Mitzvah dedicating his first actions to the helping of another Jew — even a Jew whom he never saw before in his life — through the giving of *tzedakah* or by helping an institution. Doing such an act with gladness of heart adds in G-d’s blessings to the Bar Mitzvah.²⁸

The Bar Mitzvah boy should also try to persuade others of his age to accept upon themselves the yoke of *mitzvos*.²⁹

10. THE TEFILLIN CAMPAIGN

Since the entire Torah is compared to the *mitzvah* of tefillin,³⁰ and in the light of the aforementioned, that the boy should try to persuade others to keep *mitzvos*, it follows that every Bar Mitzvah boy should actively involve himself in the Tefillin Campaign (see Chapter on Tefillin) using his new

27. *Yechidus*, 16 Tammuz 5744.

28. *Yechidus*, 15 Tammuz 5745.

29. *Yechidus*, 9 Sivan 5746; 17 Shvat 5742. See also *Hisvaadiyus* 5748, Vol. II, p. 94; 5750, Vol. II, p. 248.

30. *Kiddushin* 35a.

tefillin not just for himself but to follow the Rebbe's directive and put on tefillin with another Jew.

11. A CHASSIDISHER BOY

The Bar Mitzvah boy should accept upon himself to keep *mitzvos*, not only in strict accordance with the rules of the Torah, but he should also accept to do them in a beautiful way, above and beyond the letter of the law³¹ — *middas chassidus* — all being permeated with the light and warmth of *chassidus*.³²

12. ALL ISRAEL ARE DEEMED KOSHER

“Better is the day of death than the day of birth.”³³ The reasoning behind this statement is that on the day of death, it is known retrospectively what kind of person he was, whereas on the day of birth his life remains uncharted. We therefore prefer the retrospective knowledge available on the day of death to the uncertainty of the day of birth.³⁴

This being the case, what is the great *simchah* of the Bar Mitzvah, since we do not know the direction the boy's life will take? Furthermore it is precisely on this day that the boy becomes obligated in *mitzvos* and liable for punishment for his misdeeds. Why rejoice, then, in an uncertain future?

One cannot suggest that this *simchah* is reserved only for great *tzaddikim* such as Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai and his son, of whom it is said,³⁵ “I have seen men of elevation and they are but a few” — in whose case one could argue that Rashbi foresaw the great righteousness of his son R. Elazar which would justify a *simchah*. However, this cannot be the case for the commentary *Magen Avraham*³⁶ quotes the *simchah* of *Rashbi* as the source for everybody to make a *simchah* on the day of the

31. *Yechidus*, 28 Nissan 5750.

32. *Yechidus*, 24 Kislev 5745.

33. *Koheles* 7:1.

34. See *Koheles Rabbah* 7:1.

35. *Sukkah* 45b.

36. *Orach Chaim* 225:4. See further *Sefer HaSichos* 5748, Vol. II, p. 403 footnotes 63-4.

Bar Mitzvah — a *simchah* as great as that on the day of a wedding!

One must therefore say that this *simchah* is based on the principle,³⁷ “All Israel are deemed kosher” that is, we presume that most definitely this boy will keep Torah and *mitzvos* and we rejoice in the fact that he is now of an age to become obligated in the *mitzvos*.³⁸

13. BRINGS CLOSER THE REDEMPTION

The *Mishnah* in *Avos* states: “There is no free man except for one who engages in the study of Torah.” From here we may derive that Torah is the key to freedom from one’s own evil inclination — a personal redemption. It follows that the day of Bar Mitzvah, which is the day the boy becomes obligated to study Torah and keep the *mitzvos*, is therefore a day of personal redemption.³⁹ In fact, the transition from keeping *mitzvos* for reasons of *chinuch* to that of becoming obligated to keep them, may be compared to the movement from *Golus* to *Geulah*, for the keeping of *mitzvos* in *Golus* is only a “*Chinuch*” when compared to the full keeping of *mitzvos* at the time of *Geulah*.⁴⁰ One could even go as far to say that in *Golus*, the entire Jewish people keep *mitzvos* like children, and when *Mashiach* comes we will celebrate our national Bar Mitzvah.⁴¹

In a wider perspective, this additional input enhances the general *mitzvah* input of the entire Jewish people and surely hastens and brings closer the redemption through our righteous *Mashiach*.⁴²

It should be noted that in the last *Yechidus* (prior to the revelation of *Mashiach*) which the Rebbe gave to Bar Mitzvah

37. *Rambam, Hilchos Kiddush HaChodesh 2:2.*

38. *Sichah of Acharon Shel Pesach 5748 — Sefer HaSichos 5748, Vol. II, pp. 402-3.*

39. *Yechidus, 15 Tammuz 5746.*

40. *Yechidus, 16 Adar 5747. See also Yechidus, 22 Kislev 5746.*

41. *Yechidus, 15 Shvat 5751.*

42. *Yechidus, 15 Tammuz 5749. See also Yechidus of 19 Adar 5745 that each additional member of Klal Yisrael adds to the “Kahal Gadol” which will be assembled when Mashiach arrives.*

boys — on the 17th of Shvat 5752 — the Rebbe demanded that the boys use all their energy, “to bring the days of *Mashiach*.”

14. A DAY TO MAKE A REQUEST

The Talmud⁴³ relates that King David died on the festival of Shavuos. The books *Tvuos Shor* and *Binyan Ariel* state that since “the A-lmighty completes the days of the righteous exactly, from day to day” — for we find that many righteous people died on the very day that they were born — it follows that Shavuos is also the birthday of King David.

On the verse in Tehillim 2:7, “You are My son, I have begotten you this day”, the *Zohar*⁴⁴ comments that this is the verse King David composed on the day of his Bar Mitzvah.⁴⁵

In addition to that which at the *Bris Milah* the *Nefesh Elokim* entered the body, as the Alter Rebbe states in the beginning of his *Shulchan Aruch*, that is only the level of *nefesh*, *ruach* and *neshamah*. Thereafter, however, if one’s mode of service is correct and as it should be, at the moment of Bar Mitzvah there is also drawn down the level of *Atzilus*.

This is the reason why Rabbi Shimon made a feast and *simchah* when Rabbi Elazar his son became Bar Mitzvah, a *simchah* similar to that of a wedding.

Since, as stated above, Shavuos is King David’s birthday, it follows that the Bar Mitzvah of King David was also on Shavuos and the verse, “You are My son etc.,” was spoken on Shavuos.

Since King David wrote this verse in *Tehillim*, a book read by every Jew, each according to his level (and particularly following the directive of my father-in-law the Previous Rebbe that one should recite the Book of *Tehillim* as it is divided into the days of the month — and this institution is applicable to all — and even those who recite the *Tehillim* in a different order

43. *Talmud Yerushalmi*, Beitzah 2:4.

44. Vol. II, p. 98a. See *Or HaChamah* explanation of R. Chaim Vital, *ibid*. Notes of Tzemach Tzedek on *Tehillim* 2:7.

45. King David said, “I am obliged to proclaim that G-d said to me, ‘You are My son, I have begotten you this day’,” meaning that from the level of “*Ani Tefillah*” was drawn a holy soul. *Likkutei Sichos*, *ibid*.

should also recite them as they are divided monthly — and in fact this mode of reciting *Tehillim* is becoming more and more widespread), it therefore follows that all the things that King David said in *Tehillim* for *Knesses Yisrael* are openly revealed to each Jew according to his level, including this verse and its contents, “You are My son, I have begotten you this day, Only ask it of Me and I will make nations your inheritance, and the ends of the earth your possession.”

The sense of the verse is: what we will ask from G-d He will fulfill — each Jew his heart’s requests.⁴⁶

15. AFTER BAR MITZVAH

It should be emphasized that all the preparations to the Bar Mitzvah, and the entire *chinuch* until Bar Mitzvah, are only preparatory. After Bar Mitzvah begins the real *chinuch*: of each day surpassing the last; of “ascending in matters of holiness” with deeper understanding in the learning of Torah and beautification in *mitzvos*.⁴⁷



46. *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. II, pp. 568-9.

47. *Yechidus*, 16 Adar 5747.

Chapter 2

PREPARATIONS FOR THE BAR MITZVAH

IN THE MONTHS BEFORE THE BAR MITZVAH

1. Just as in the physical sense tefillin are put on two months before the Bar Mitzvah to allow the boy to learn to perform the *mitzvah* properly, so too in the spiritual sense there must be a period of preparation. It is therefore correct that the Bar Mitzvah boy should learn the laws of tefillin, including the meditation before donning the tefillin.¹

To quote from the Alter Rebbe's *Siddur*:²

“When one puts on tefillin, he should bear in mind that the Holy One, blessed be He, commanded us to write on the parchment contained in the tefillin the four specific Biblical passages that mention His Unity and the Exodus from Egypt, in order that we remember the miracles and wonders He performed for us. They indicate His Unity and demonstrate that He has the power and dominion over those above and below to do with them as He wishes. And He has enjoined us to place the tefillin on the arm adjacent to the heart, and on the head over the brain so that we submit our soul, which has its seat in the brain, as well as the desires and thoughts of our heart, to His service. Thus, by putting on the tefillin, one will be mindful of the Creator and restrict his pleasures.”

One should also reflect on the following words of the Alter Rebbe in *Tanya*, ch. 41: “Specifically, in the case of the *tefillin*, (he should intend) that the attributes of wisdom and understanding which are in his divine soul may be nullified and absorbed into the attributes of wisdom and understanding of the

1. *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. XI, p. 340.

2. *Siddur Tehillat HaShem*, p. 12.

blessed *Ein Sof*, which are clothed in particular, in the chapters of *Shema* and *Vehayah Ki Yeviacha*. That is to say, that he should use his wisdom and understanding that are in his soul, only for G-d alone.”

These ideas should be engraved upon the mind and will definitely produce and positively influence good conduct and *mitzvah* performance.

2. The Rebbe often instructed boys to learn the beginning of Ch. 41 in *Tanya* as a preparation for the Bar Mitzvah.³ In general the Rebbe encouraged the learning of *Tanya* at this age,⁴ and the learning of *chassidus* in general, both the weekly *parshah* in *Likkutei Torah* and *Torah Or*⁵ and the easier *maamarim* in *chassidus*.⁶

3. In addition to reciting the Book of *Tehillim* as it is divided according to the days of the month, one’s own chapter of *Tehillim* should be recited, and before the Bar Mitzvah it is important that Ch. 13 be recited daily. One should also give — *bli neder* — a few coins to *tzedakah* before prayers.⁷

4. Before the Bar Mitzvah, the boy should be fluent in, and have memorized, a number of chapters of *Tehillim*, *Mishnah* and *Tanya*, and he should review them from time to time.⁸

YECHIDUS

1. It was always the custom in Lubavitch for a father to bring his son to the Rebbe for *Yechidus* so that he receive the Rebbe’s blessing for the Bar Mitzvah.⁹ In more recent years, groups of Bar Mitzvah boys would enter into *Yechidus* together

3. *Igros Kodesh, ibid.*, Vol. VIII, p. 195. See also Vol. XI p. 153 — the subjugation of the heart and mind being the essence of *Toras Chabad*.

4. *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. IX, p. 221.

5. Many chassidim have the custom of reviewing the *sedra* with the *chassidisher parshah* of *Torah Or* and *Likkutei Torah* (in fact this was one of the directives to the *International Kinus HaShluchim* of 5752), and many chassidim do this together with their family and children at the age of Bar Mitzvah (and some earlier). *Sichah Shabbos Parshas Lech Lecha* 5749.

6. *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. XVIII, p. 265. Although such *maamarim* should not be learned less than the age of 12.

7. *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. XI, p. 340; see also Vol. XVIII, p. 172.

8. *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. IX, p. 166

9. See *Maseches Sofrim* 18:5.

with their parents. If at all possible, one should visit the *Ohel* before the Bar Mitzvah. The Rebbe instructed certain Bar Mitzvah boys to recite the Bar Mitzvah *maamar* by the *Ohel* (in its entirety or at least in part.)¹⁰

ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE *SIMCHAH*

1. The Bar Mitzvah meal should be scheduled for the day of the Bar Mitzvah itself.¹¹ At least ten people should be present and the Bar Mitzvah boy should say *divrei Torah*, both *nigleh* and *chassidus*.¹²

If for whatever reason it is inconvenient to make the *simchah* on the day itself, and one wishes to make a large *simchah* on a later date with the participation of more people — then one may do so. However, a small *simchah* with at least ten people present should be made on the day of the Bar Mitzvah itself, to mark the actual Bar Mitzvah day.¹³

The *simchah* should not be made before the actual date of the Bar Mitzvah.¹⁴ See footnote.¹⁵

10. See *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. V, p. 95. *Yechidus* of R. S. Zalmanov on the occasion of his son's Bar Mitzvah, 15 Av 5712. R. M. Shusterman from the book *L'maan Yaidu*, p. 130. See also *Likkutei Dibburim*, Vol. I, p. 104.

11. *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. XIX, p. 218.

12. *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. XXII, p. 23.

13. *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. XIX, p. 405; Vol. XXII, p. 23; Vol. XXIII, p. 34.

14. *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. XVI, p. 150.

15. Regarding a Bar Mitzvah that fell on *Erev Tishah BeAv*, the Rebbe writes in *Igros Kodesh* Vol. XV, p. 257 that one should first inquire if there is a specific custom in the community as to when to schedule a Bar Mitzvah in this case, and if there is no special custom, then one should make the Bar Mitzvah meal on the night of the 8th of Av, and if this is impossible for whatever reason, then the meal should be made on the following Shabbos.

In response to a question as to when to schedule a Bar Mitzvah meal when the Bar Mitzvah falls out on the 15th of Nissan, the Rebbe responds in *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. XIX, p. 196, that in any case, there should be some kind of a *simchah* on the day itself.

As regards a Bar Mitzvah falling on a Friday, in *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. XXII, p. 23, the Rebbe instructs that the Bar Mitzvah be made on the day itself. (A Rav should be consulted as to when the meal should be held and the number of people invited.)

As regards a Bar Mitzvah on Erev Rosh HaShanah — see *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. XVII, p. 87 that the Bar Mitzvah be made the night before, since the moment he enters into the birthdate, he is obligated in all *mitzvos* — and this is one of the reasons why the *Shas* begins with the subject of the reading of the *Shema* in the

2. One should not squander money in making an extravagant Bar Mitzvah; rather it should be a *chassidisher* gathering, the effect of which will continue for weeks and months afterwards. Such a gathering will have the effect of increasing the Divine assistance granted to the Bar Mitzvah boy, who was the object of the *simchah*.¹⁶

The Bar Mitzvah should be used as the opportunity and occasion to draw people's hearts nearer to *Yiddishkeit*.¹⁷

READING THE *SEDRAH*

It is far better that the Bar Mitzvah boy should spend the months of preparation for his Bar Mitzvah learning *Halachah* that is needed on a day-to-day basis, than to spend a large amount of time learning to read his *Sedrah*.¹⁸



evening — for this is the very first *mitzvah* performed by the Bar Mitzvah boy on the day of his Bar Mitzvah.

As regards a Bar Mitzvah on *Erev Yom Kippur* — see *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. XI, p. 340 that the beginning of the *simchah* should take place on *Erev Yom Kippur* particularly in the first half of the day and it should be continued on *Motzaei Yom Kippur* — as we then wish each other “A Good *Yom Tov*.”

16. *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. XVII, p. 49.

17. *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. X, p. 213.

18. The Rebbe voices his opinion in this matter in numerous places. He makes the point that in previous generations, when boys were engaged most of their day in learning, in those times teaching — those who had the aptitude — how to read their *Sedrah* was considered to be a bonus, and even then, was done outside of their learning schedule in order not to take valuable time away from their studies. However nowadays, people have made the principle secondary and the secondary a principle. Some boys spend the bulk of their time studying their *Sedrah*, and little time learning basic *Halachah*. This is clearly wrong. See *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. XVIII, p. 222; Vol. XX, p. 118, 137.

Chapter 3

BAR MITZVAH CUSTOMS

PUTTING ON TEFILLIN FOR THE FIRST TIME

1. A boy begins putting on tefillin two months before his Bar Mitzvah; at first without the *berachah*, then, a few weeks later with the *berachah*. This is a directive for all.¹

2. The custom is not to recite the blessing “*Shehechyanu*” when putting on the tefillin the first time.²

3. Both tefillin of *Rashi* and *Rabbeinu Tam* are put on two months before the Bar Mitzvah.³

4. The tefillin should be worn for the entire duration of the prayers.⁴

5. Some have the custom for the father or teacher to help the boy lay the tefillin for the first time, and make sure that the

1. *HaYom Yom*, entry for Menachem Av 2, p. 75. See also *Igros Kodesh* of the Rebbe Rayatz, Vol. VII, p. 24. *Shulchan Aruch HaRav*, Ch. 37 (end). There is an alternative opinion voiced in the *Poskim*, that since tefillin requires purity of body, they should not be layed before the Bar Mitzvah, however, since the Rebbes of Chabad have voiced their opinion and have declared that this is a directive to the public, therefore it is a *mitzvah* to listen to their words — *Igros Kodesh* of the Rebbe, Vol. XVII, p. 61. As regards the timing of the *berachah* see *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. XI, p. 76; Vol. 14 p. 63; *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. XI, p. 200, where the Rebbe explains that until the boy knows how to lay the tefillin properly, he should not make a *berachah* for it could be in vain. Since not everybody is the same, and some learn quicker than others, no time limits were set in the directive, only when the boy is proficient and the tefillin layed properly, then a *berachah* may be recited.

Regarding an orphan — although some suggest that he should lay tefillin at the age of twelve, however the above directive was for all, including an orphan, and he too should put on tefillin for the first time two months before the Bar Mitzvah — *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. III, p. 136; Vol. 9 p. 193.

2. *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. XI, p. 289. *Sefer Hisvaadiyus 5742*, Vol. II, p. 1112.

3. See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. II, p. 507; *Sefer HaSichos 5749*, Vol. II, p. 632, *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. XXVI, p. 404.

4. *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. XVIII, p. 266.

tefillin are positioned correctly. Thereafter, the boy should be supervised to make sure he is laying them correctly.⁵

6. If there is a Chol HaMoed within these two months, the starting date should be two months and a week before the Bar Mitzvah.⁶

THE DAY OF THE BAR MITZVAH

1. There should be *simchah* on the day of the Bar Mitzvah comparable to that of a wedding.⁷ However *Tachanun* is recited.⁸

2. It is right and proper that the Bar Mitzvah boy should give of his own money to *tzedakah* on the day of his Bar Mitzvah, in the morning before *Shacharis*, and before *Minchah*.⁹ The *tzedakah* should preferably be given to an institution involved with *Chinuch*.¹⁰ If the Bar Mitzvah day falls on Shabbos he should give the *tzedakah* on the Friday before and on the Sunday after the Bar Mitzvah. His parents should do likewise.¹¹

3. On the day of the Bar Mitzvah after *Shacharis*, the congregants gather together, and the father of the Bar Mitzvah

5. *Os Chaim* 37:5.

6. *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. XXI, p. 357, *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. XXIII, p. 89.

7. See note of the Rebbe printed in *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5702, p. 143. See also *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. V, p. 86 and *Sefer HaMinhagim-Chabad* p. 75 quoting *Zohar Chadash, Bereishis* 15:4.

8. From a letter of the Rebbe 24 Sivan 5728. See *Sichos Kodesh*, 11 Nissan 5722; sec. 1; *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. XXXV, p. 276. There are various reasons offered by the Rebbe why *Tachanun* is recited; 1) for the day of Bar Mitzvah is not a *Yom Tov*, rather a workday, which indicates to the Bar Mitzvah boy that he has to work in Torah and *mitzvos*, 2) it is an auspicious day to supplicate — rather like on a day of a *tzaddik's* *yahrzeit* when it is the *Chabad* custom to recite *tachanun*; 3) for the intent of *Tachanun* is *teshuvah* and this reminds the Bar Mitzvah boy that nothing stands in the way of *teshuvah* — see *Heichal Menachem* Vol. 1 p. 45-47. There are other *minhagim* that do not recite *Tachanun*. See *Darkei Chaim VeShalom* (Munkatch) no. 192; *Kitzos HaShulchan* (by R. Avraham Chaim Noeh) Vol. 1:24:5; *Badei HaShulchan* *ibid.*, no. 19. See also “The Laws and customs of Bar Mitzvah by R. Adler (*Yerushalayim* 5734) Ch. 3, p. 73 note 5.

9. If he usually gives *tzedakah* at these times, then more should be given on the day of the Bar Mitzvah — *Yechidus*, 13 Shvat 5750.

10. *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. XX, p. 579.

11. *Yechidus* for Bar Mitzvah 5742; *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. XX, p. 578; Vol. XXVI, p. 347; *Hisvaadiyus* 5746, Vol. II, p. 84.

boy speaks briefly in honor of the *simchah*. Afterwards, the Bar Mitzvah boy recites the *Maamar*, after which cake and *Mashke* are offered to those assembled.¹²

4. The custom is for the Bar Mitzvah boy to recite the *Maamar* “*Issa B’Midrash Tehillim*” which was the *Maamar* recited by the Rebbe Rashab on his Bar Mitzvah in the year 5653.¹³

5. During the day, the Bar Mitzvah boy should learn the 14th chapter in *Tehillim*.¹⁴

6. The meal celebrating the Bar Mitzvah is held in the evening.¹⁵ It is customary for the Bar Mitzvah boy to repeat the *Maamar* at the meal, in addition to¹⁶saying *Divrei Torah* — as is the custom in all communities.¹⁷

In a letter,¹⁸ the Rebbe expressed his satisfaction on being informed that the Bar Mitzvah boy had said a *Derashah* based on *Likkutei Sichos*, and the Rebbe praised the clarity and style in which it was written — in a way that all would understand.

7. One should not interrupt the Bar Mitzvah boy in the middle of his *Dvar Torah* (by singing etc.) However, in communities where it is the custom to interrupt the *Dvar Torah*, one should do so in the following way; first the *Dvar Torah* should be said through from beginning to end. Then the *Dvar*

12. *Sefer HaMinhagim, ibid.*

13. *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. XVI, p. 499. In *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. XIX, p. 111, the Rebbe writes that this *Maamar* is easy to learn by heart.

14. *Yechidus* for Bar Mitzvah 5742; *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. XX, p. 578, *Hisvaadiyus 5746*, Vol. II, p. 485.

15. See *Magen Avraham* to *Shulchan Aruch*, 225:4.

16. This was a directive from the Rebbe in a *Yechidus* with the *chassid* Reb Yisrael Leibov. The Rebbe said that this may be publicized.

17. In *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. XVII, p. 230 the Rebbe writes that it is his firm opinion that the Bar Mitzvah boy needs to prepare for the Bar Mitzvah, not only the *Maamar* but also something in *nigleh*. As to whether the *nigleh* is said in public, there are different customs. However see *Hisvaadiyus 5750*, Vol. I, p. 162, where the Rebbe writes that the subject of *nigleh* should be a *pilpul*, and since this is a custom that has spread in *Klal Yisrael*, it is a proof that it is a good custom, and as the *Rambam* writes in *Hilchos Mamrim* 2:2 that customs that have spread and been accepted in *Klal Yisrael* have the status of commandments. See also *Zohar, Mishpatim* p. 98a, *Kaf HaChaim*, 225:11; *Siddur Otzar HaTefillos*, p. 267; *Ba'er Haitev* 225:4 in the name of *Maharshal*.

18. 3 Nissan 5738.

Torah should be repeated and it is during the repetition that he may be interrupted.¹⁹

8. The Bar Mitzvah meal is considered a *seudas mitzvah*, and at the meal it is proper for the parents to give thanks and praise to *Hashem* for giving them the merit to raise a child to Bar Mitzvah and to educate him in the ways of Torah and *mitzvos*.²⁰

9. Those present at the meal should bless the Bar Mitzvah boy in all he requires both materially and spiritually.²¹ They express the wish that the Bar Mitzvah boy should grow to be a chassid, *Yerai Shomayim* G-d fearing, and a *lamdan* — a “*chayal*.”²² This blessing should be given in the spirit of the well-known saying of the Rebbeim that a *chassidisher farbrengen* can achieve what even the Archangel Michoel cannot achieve.²³

19. From a letter of the Rebbe 4 Tishrei 5718, printed in *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. X, p. 208; see *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. XV, p. 401; Vol. XVI, p. 3.

Apparently the reason behind the custom to interrupt in the middle of the *Dvar Torah* is so not to embarrass one who does not have what to say. On a number of occasions, the Rebbe spoke about this custom.

In a private audience with the Gerrer Rebbe Reb Pinchas Menachem Alter o.b.m. and Rabbi Menashe Klein on the 13th Elul 5739, the Rebbe related that when the Previous Rebbe came to Poland, he celebrated the Bar Mitzvah of his grandchild. The custom in Poland was to interrupt the boy in the middle. The Previous Rebbe said about this custom, “when you go to a place, you should follow its custom, yet on the other hand there is the beauty in hearing *chassidus*, therefore the *Maamar* should be said once in its entirety and then repeated, and interrupted by the repetition.” That is how it was. They allowed the Bar Mitzvah to finish once and then in order to keep to the *minhag*, he repeated the *Maamar* and was then interrupted. The Rebbe then commented, “When I arrived at the Bar Mitzvah I did not know of such a custom and the whole thing was incredible in my eyes — a Jew says words of Torah and somebody interrupts him!”

On the 24th of Sivan 5751, the day after the wedding of Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Klein, the son the secretary of the Rebbe, Rabbi Binyomin Klein, the Rebbe inquired of the *Mazkir* whether the *chossan* had been interrupted in the middle of the *Maamar*. The *Mazkir* answered that following the Rebbe's directive in the past the *chossan* had not been interrupted. The Rebbe responded that after the *chossan* has finished the *Maamar* once, he should repeat it again and be interrupted on the second time around — this is the custom and the custom should not be annulled. The Rebbe then instructed the *Mazkir* to publicize this matter. (From a collection of the Rebbe's instructions as regards weddings, printed by Kehot p. 139)

20. See *Sefer HaSichos 5748*, Vol. II, p. 403.

21. *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. XXIII, p. 34.

22. See *Sichah of Shabbos Parshas Metzora Shabbos HaGadol*, 12 Nissan 5730, for an explanation of the term *Chayal*; *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. X, pp. 263-4; Vol. IX, pp. 272-4. See also *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. VII, p. 213.

23. *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. X, p. 376.

Those attending the Bar Mitzvah should also actively participate in the *simchah* by saying *divrei Torah* of their own.²⁴

10. Many have the custom of reading a letter from the Rebbe written in honor of a Bar Mitzvah.²⁵

11. Some have the custom of honoring the Bar Mitzvah boy by having him lead the *Benching*.²⁶

12. One does not recite the blessing *Shehechyanu* on the occasion of the Bar Mitzvah.²⁷

13. It is customary for the Bar Mitzvah boy and his parents to wear Shabbos clothes on the day of the Bar Mitzvah.²⁸

14. According to the letter of the law it is not necessary that a Bar Mitzvah boy do *teshuvah* for those sins committed before Bar Mitzvah age, however it is proper for a boy to accept upon himself some form of *Teshuvah* for sins committed in his youth.²⁹

THE ALIYAH

1. An effort should be made to arrange for the Bar Mitzvah boy's first *Aliyah* to be on a Monday or Thursday morning or on Shabbos during *Minchah*.³⁰

24. *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. XIX, p. 271.

25. *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. IV, p. 344.

26. *Minhagim* of Vermaissa 289; *Aruch HaShulchan*, 199:4; *Responsa Maharam Brisk* Vol. II, No. 68.

27. *Sefer HaSichos 5748*, Vol. II, p. 403. The reason why the blessing is not made is not because there is a doubt whether the boy will keep Torah and *mitzvos*, rather because the blessing is only made on an actual pleasure that is here now, and not on a pleasure that will come in the future. The pleasure of the Bar Mitzvah is the fulfillment of *mitzvos* that will come in the days after the Bar Mitzvah, and throughout his entire lifetime — it lies only in potential on the day of Bar Mitzvah and therefore the blessing is not recited — footnote 71 *ibid*.

28. See *Ben Ish Chai Parshas Re'eh* 17.

29. *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim*, 343:11; see *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. XIV, p. 144.

30. *Sefer HaMinhagim, ibid*. This is a directive of the Alter Rebbe — See *Likkutei Dibburim*, Vol. II, p. 267 at length. See also *Yechidus* of R. S. Zalmanov, printed in *Heichal Menachem* p. 211 where because of the auspicious nature of the time of *Shabbos Minchah*, the Rebbe instructed that the Bar Mitzvah boy should have an *Aliyah* on Thursday, the day of the Bar Mitzvah and also on *Shabbos Minchah*.

See also *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. XVII, p. 87 for a reason as to why some have the custom to call the boy up first for *Mafkir*, however, as the Rebbe there explains, this is not an accepted custom (even *halachically* — see *Likkutei Mahariach* 136:1, *Responsa Divrei Malkiel* Vol. 1:4.)

2. G-d's name should not be mentioned when the blessing *Boruch Shepatorani*³¹ is recited.³² This blessing is not only recited on Shabbos, but can be made on Mondays, Thursdays and Rosh Chodesh as well.



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31. "*Boruch Shepatorani Me'onesh Haloze*" — this is the text in the Alter Rebbe's *Siddur* — see *Kitzos HaShulchan* 65:6, *Badei HaShulchan* 13 *ibid*. The blessing should be recited when the Bar Mitzvah boy has an *Aliyah*, not when the father has an *Aliyah* — *Heichal Menachem* p. 213.
32. From a letter of the Rebbe 27 Nissan 5713. The Previous Rebbe related that the Alter Rebbe did make this blessing reciting G-d's name upon the Bar Mitzvah of his son the Mittler Rebbe — see *Likkutei Dibburim*, Vol. II, p. 528. See *Kovetz Yagdil Torah (Yerushalayim)* Vol. 5 p. 85. In R. Adler's book, "The Laws and customs of Bar Mitzvah" Ch. 5, 3:12 he writes in connection with this matter: I have heard from the elders of *Chabad* that only the Rebbes of *Chabad* recite the blessing with G-d's name whereas *chassidim* do not mention G-d's name, the reason being that since the Rebbe will definitely fulfill the *mitzvah* of *chinuch* in its entirety, then so too may the blessing be said in its entirety, whereas others, it may be doubtful whether they have fulfilled the *mitzvah* of *chinuch* properly and they therefore do not mention G-d's name. See also *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. VII, p. 228 where the Rebbe writes in the name of the Previous Rebbe that although the Rebbeim did say *Hashem's* name, this is not a directive for all.

Chapter 4

TEFILLIN

A Brief summary of the practical laws of Tefillin¹

It goes without saying that before Bar Mitzvah, the boy should learn the halachos of tefillin thoroughly in the Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch. Presented below is only a brief summary, stressing the most practical points.

THE MITZVAH

1. It is a positive commandment to put on tefillin *shel yad*, as it says, "And bind them as a sign on your hand," and to put on tefillin *shel rosh*, as it says, "And they shall be tefillin (*totafos*) between your eyes."² Among the positive commandments there is no *mitzvah* greater than the *mitzvah* of tefillin, and every Jewish male should be very careful to keep this *mitzvah* properly.³ One who is meticulous in the *mitzvah* of tefillin will merit long life, and is promised a share in the World to Come. The fire of *Gehinom* will not touch him and all his sins will be forgiven.⁴

2. The earliest one may put on tefillin is after *amud hashachar* (the crack of dawn), when it is possible to recognize

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1. Much of this material has been gleaned from the *Sefer Shevach Yikor* by R. Shmuel Halevi Hurwitz.
 2. *Devarim* 6:8; *Rambam Sefer HaMitzvos* 12,13.
 3. *Shulchan Aruch HaRav*, 37:1. See *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. XX, p. 270.
 4. *Tur Orach Chaim* 37. The Alter Rebbe explains this in *Shulchan Aruch* to mean that if on the Day of Judgment, a person's good deeds and bad deeds are equal, the merit of the *mitzvah* of tefillin will tip the scales for merit.

one's friend at a distance of four cubits.⁵ Tefillin may be laid the entire day until sunset.⁶

3. It is a worthy custom to give a small sum of money to *tzedakah* before putting on the tefillin.⁷

4. If the tefillin are worn in an incorrect position, if, for instance, the tefillin *shel rosh* are resting on the forehead, one has not fulfilled the mitzvah.⁸ It is therefore very important to know the *halachah* pertaining to the correct placement of the tefillin and to check constantly that they are in the right position.

HAVING THE CORRECT INTENTIONS WHEN PUTTING ON THE TEFILLIN

1. The Alter Rebbe writes in his *Siddur*:

“When one puts on tefillin, he should bear in mind that the Holy One, blessed be He, commanded us to write on the parchment contained in the tefillin the four specific Biblical passages which mention His Unity and the Exodus from Egypt, in order that we remember the miracles and wonders He performed for us. They indicate His Unity and demonstrate that He has the power and dominion over those above and below, to do with them as He wishes. And He has enjoined us to place the tefillin on the arm adjacent to the heart, and on the head over the brain so that we submit our soul which is in the brain, as well as the desires and thoughts of our heart, to His service. Thus, by putting on the tefillin, one will be mindful of the Creator and restrict his pleasures.”

One should also be familiar with the content of *Tanya*, Ch. 41, in which the Alter Rebbe writes that the point of tefillin is to effect that the person's wisdom and understanding be used only

5. *Shulchan Aruch HaRav*, 30:1.

6. But not after sunset. If one forgot to lay tefillin the entire day and one remembered after sunset, at twilight (*Bein Hashmoshos*) they should be put on without a *berachah* — *Biur Halachah* 30 (end).

7. See *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. XIX, p. 168, p. 269, p. 378; Vol. XVIII, p. 254; Vol. XX, p. 99; *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. XXI, p. 357; *Heichal Menachem*, p. 236.

8. *Pri Megodim Mishbetzos Zahav* 27:6. The *Aruch HaShulchan*, 27:20 writes that it is of great merit to approach a person whose tefillin are incorrectly positioned and adjust them.

for *Hashem's* purposes — filled with *Ahavas Hashem* and *yiras shomayim* — all of which reflects itself in his diligence in studying Torah.⁹

The time of putting on the tefillin is an appropriate moment to strengthen the connection — the *hiskashrus* that one has with the Rebbe.¹⁰

2. One who only has a general *kavanah* that is, that *Hashem* has commanded us to lay tefillin, but does not have in mind the reasons of the *mitzvah*, has fulfilled his obligation but has not done the *mitzvah* as it should be done.¹¹

3. In addition to knowing the reason why we lay tefillin, most important is the result, namely, that throughout the entire day, the tefillin should have the effect that the mind and the emotions will be devoted to *Hashem*.¹²

PUTTING ON THE *SHEL YAD*

1. The tefillin are put on before saying *Aizehu Mekomon*.¹³ The tefillin *shel yad* should first be removed from the tefillin bag in a respectful way, (not shaken out). If one first removed the tefillin *shel rosh*, it should be put on one side, and the tefillin *shel yad* removed.¹⁴ It is customary to kiss the tefillin when they are taken out and when they are put back.¹⁵

2. The tefillin *shel yad* is to be put on the left biceps. It should not be laid above the middle of the upper arm nor at its very bottom, below the biceps, for it is written,¹⁶ “You shall place these words of Mine upon your heart...” that is, the tefillin shall be placed opposite the heart, that is, on the biceps, which is directly adjacent to the heart. Therefore, one should

9. See *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. VIII, p. 195.

10. *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. IV, p. 51.

11. The *Bach* writes (*Orach Chaim* 8 and 25 and 625) that the *kavannah* of this *mitzvah* is part of the *mitzvah*. The Rebbe in *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. XIV, p. 152; Vol. XXXII, p. 141, explains that in the case of tefillin the main part of the *mitzvah* lies in the *kavannah* of the *mitzvah* as he proves from the scriptural verses.

12. See *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5718, *Maamar Karov*.

13. *HaYom Yom*, entry for 19 Av.

14. *Shulchan Aruch HaRav*, 25:12.

15. *Ibid.*, 28:9,10.

16. *Devarim* 11:18.

turn the tefillin *shel yad* slightly towards his body, so that when the arm is lowered, the tefillin will be directly opposite the heart.¹⁷

3. Care must be taken that there be nothing intervening between the tefillin and the flesh. (When a long-sleeved shirt is worn, care should be taken that no part of the shirt be caught under the tefillin.)¹⁸ The same is true of the *shel rosh*, where one has to be careful that the *retzuah* (strap) is resting on the head and not on the *yarmulka*. If one has a bandage on the arm or head, a Rav should be consulted as to what to do. A watch should be removed from the wrist.

4. After placing the tefillin on the biceps, and before tightening it, the *berachah*, “*I’honiach tefillin*” is recited. There must be no interruption between putting on the tefillin *shel yad* and the tefillin *shel rosh*. While reciting the *berachah*, one should intend that it apply also to the tefillin *shel rosh*.¹⁹

5. It is our custom that both the *berachah* and the actual laying of the tefillin are completed standing.²⁰

6. After the *berachah*, one should tighten the strap within the knot so as to fulfil the commandment, “You shall bind them for a sign upon your hand.” The “yud,” *keshet* (knot) on the tefillin *shel yad* should never be separated from the *bayis* (lit. the house) — almost to be compared with the *choshen* (breastplate) of the *Kohen Gadol* which was never allowed to be separated from the *ephod*.²¹

7. The “yud” *keshet* of the tefillin *shel yad* should always be touching the *bayis*. If the tefillin have a protective covering (that will protect the corners from wearing down), then a space should be cut out of the covering so that the *keshet* is in constant contact with the *bayis*.²² The Rebbe’s custom is to wear such a

17. *Siddur HaRav, Tehillat Hashem Siddur*, p. 12.

18. *Ibid.*

19. *Ibid.*

20. *Shulchan Aruch HaRav*, 25:27, *Reshimos* of year 5703.

21. *Heichal Menachem*, Vol. I, p. 210.

22. *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. XII, p. 433; *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. XXI, p. 356. This was the Rebbe’s custom, although apparently the Previous Rebbe had a protective covering which was not cut out, which suggested that the covering was not on the tefillin during the prayers.

protective covering for the entire duration of the Tefillah so that the corners of the tefillin not be worn down.²³

8. After tightening the knot, the *retzuah* should be wound twice around the protruding part of the base of the tefillin through which the *retzuah* passes, in such a way as to create the shape of the letter “*Shin*.”²⁴

9. The *retzuah* is then wound seven times around the forearm.²⁵ It is our custom to divide these seven coils in the following way; after winding the first coil on the forearm, a small space is left, then one winds two coils close to each other, then another space is left, and then we wind the final four coils.²⁶

Then a final half-coil is made diagonally so as to wind the *retzuah* around the palm, resulting in the shape of an inverted letter “*Daled*.”²⁷ The winding is always made in an outward motion away from the body.

PUTTING ON THE SHEL ROSH

1. The tefillin *shel rosh* is now removed from the bag, and placed upon the head. Care should be taken that the *yarmulka* should not be removed while placing the tefillin on the head. Further care should be taken that the *retzuah* should not be inverted.

2. There are various ways in which the tefillin *shel rosh* may be placed on the head. Some hold the *retzuos* and allow the tefillin to hang in the air and then put it on.²⁸ Others place the

23. *Igros Kodesh, ibid.* Rabbi Y. L. Groner said that the Rebbe placed this protective covering on the tefillin after he finished wrapping the *retzuah* around the palm, before he put on the tefillin *shel rosh*. *Ashkavta D'Rebbe* note 23 writes that this is the *minhag* of many of *Anash*.

24. *Shaar HaKavannos* of the *AriZal*; *Siddur HaRav*.

25. *Shulchan Aruch HaRav*, 27:12, *Siddur HaRav*.

26. Notes of Rebbe Rashab on the *Siddur* — this was seen clearly on the Rebbe's tefillin.

27. Notes of Rebbe Rashab on the *Siddur*. In *Ashkavta D'Rebbe* it mentions that the Rebbe Rashab used to wind the rest of the *retzuah* around the palm, tuck it in, and covered the tefillin *shel yad* with his shirt sleeve, all *before* he put on the tefillin *shel rosh*.

28. This does not constitute a lack of honor for the tefillin for this is necessary to put them on. *Shulchan Aruch HaRav*, 40:1.

knot on the *maavarta* (the protruding base of the tefillin), place the *bayis* on its correct place and then put the knot on its place.²⁹ Others hold the *bayis* in the left hand and the knot in the right hand and place them on the head.³⁰

3. The tefillin should be placed so that they lie exactly in the center of the width of the head.³¹ The base of the tefillin on the forehead should not be placed at a point lower than that where the hairs of the head start to grow. As regards the upper end on the base, this should not be placed higher than the point where, on an infant, the skull is still soft (owing to the fact that the cranial bones have not yet properly fused together).³² As previously mentioned, one does not fulfil one's obligation when the tefillin are placed too low on the forehead.³³ In order to make sure the tefillin *shel rosh* are in the right place one should ask a friend to check that they are in the center of the head, (or use a mirror).³⁴

4. The *daled* knot should be placed at the back of the head, at the very top and center of the nape of the neck.³⁵ The knot must appear to one who stands behind the wearer like the shape of a printed *daled*.³⁶ The knot should be firmly placed and not

29. *Kaf HaChaim*, 40:1. In *Ashkavta D'Rebbe* it is mentioned that this was the custom of the Rebbe Rashab.

30. *Sefer Mitzvas Tefillin* of the *Shaloh*, p. 211.

31. *Siddur HaRav*. The meaning of "between the eyes" is that if from this position one drew a vertical line down, it would pass between the eye balls.

32. *Shulchan Aruch HaRav*, 27:14.

33. In a letter to Mr. D. Lent (of Manchester — printed in the *teshurah* of the wedding of Z. S. Lent, 12th Av 5758), the Rebbe writes: "The location of the tefillin on the head is, of course, explicitly given in the *Shulchan Aruch*. If you have noticed that a certain person seems to have placed the tefillin lower than the original hairline, it is undoubtedly because the hair of that person had receded, and from the distance it would have been difficult for you to determine actually where the original hairline was. On the other hand, it is also possible that at that particular time the *shel rosh* had slipped unknowingly to the person, although he usually frequently checks the position with his hand as required by the *din*."

See further *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch*, 10:3 who writes that even if a portion of the tefillin are out of place, one has not fulfilled the *mitzvah* and the blessing has been made in vain.

34. *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. XVII, p. 364.

35. *Siddur HaRav*. See *Kovetz Likkutei Dinim* by Rabbi M. Z. Greenglass in the name of the Previous Rebbe, that the top of the knot — the roof of the *daled* — should be placed above the hole and the bottom of the knot — the foot of the *daled* — in the hole.

36. *Siddur HaRav*.

lean to one side. Furthermore, the *retzuah* should be tightened on the head so that the tefillin remain in place. If the tefillin are too loose, the length of the *retzuos* should be adjusted. It should be noted that whenever the length of the *retzuos* are adjusted this should be done with intention to perform the *mitzvah* of tefillin.

5. The *retzuos* of the *shel rosh* should then be placed so that they hang loose in front with the black surface showing. The *retzuos* should reach the stomach at least,³⁷ however it is customary to have them extend down to the feet.³⁸

6. After the *shel rosh* has been placed on the head, the coils around the palm should be removed until only one coil remains. Then three coils should be made around the middle finger, one coil on the bottom of the finger (where it is attached to the palm), the second coil on the middle of the finger, and the third coil again on the bottom of the finger,³⁹ over⁴⁰ the original first coil. The rest of the *retzuah* should be wound around the palm and at the end the *retzuah* tucked in and tied so that the *retzuos* do not become loose.⁴¹

7. One should see to it that on both the tefillin *shel yad* and *shel rosh*, the *retzuah* has the black side showing. If it was inadvertently inverted, it is a *middas chassidus* to fast. This only applies to the part of the *shel rosh retzuah* that goes around the head, and the *shel yad retzuah* that passes through the *maavarta*; however, with all the other coils around the arm, and the *retzuos* that hang loose from the *shel rosh*, one need not be so particular, for they do not constitute the essential *mitzvah*.⁴² However, for

37. See *Shulchan Aruch HaRav*, 27:20, 33:6 that the right *retzuah* should reach the stomach and the left to the breast.

38. *Sefer HaMinhagim*.

39. Notes of Rebbe Rashab on *Siddur*.

40. In the notes of the Rebbe Rashab he writes that the two coils on the bottom of the finger should be separate from one another, however the Rebbe was not particular about this and the *retzuos* were one on top of the other — heard from Rabbi Y. L. Groner — *Shevach Yikor*, p. 24 note 32.

41. The *Kitzos HaShulchan* in his notes at the end of the first volume, wants to say that from the wording of the *Siddur* the implication is that one actually has to make a knot on the palm, however the Rebbe did not do that; only he tucked the *retzuah* into the coil so that it should not become loose. *Shevach Yikor ibid.* note 33.

42. *Shulchan Aruch HaRav*, 27:19.

the sake of beautifying the *mitzvah*, it is desirable that all *retzuos* have their black side showing.⁴³

8. If one put on the tefillin *shel yad* but forgot to make a *berachah*, the *berachah* should be made before putting on the *shel rosh*. If one put on both tefillin forgetting to make a *berachah*, one may make a *berachah* the entire time the tefillin are worn, and before the *berachah* is made one should touch the tefillin.⁴⁴

9. If the tefillin *shel yad* accidentally slipped from their place during *Tefillah*, one should put them back in the correct position but it is not necessary to make another *berachah*.⁴⁵

10. If the tefillin *shel rosh* were placed on the head, and it was found necessary to remove the *shel rosh* in order to adjust the circumference, it is not necessary to make another *berachah*.

11. The *Zohar*⁴⁶ reserves special praise for those who put on *tallis* and tefillin at home and walk to *shul* with them on. The *Shulchan Aruch*⁴⁷ states that where there are non-Jews in the street or the streets are not clean, one should put them on in the courtyard of the *shul*. The Rebbe put on *tallis* and tefillin in his room and then came in to the *shul*.

INTERRUPTION BETWEEN THE *SHEL YAD* AND THE *SHEL ROSH*

1. It is prohibited to talk between putting on the tefillin *shel yad* and the *shel rosh*. Even to wink or otherwise signal with the eyes, or with the fingers is prohibited.⁴⁸ If one did say something — even one word⁴⁹ — that was not related to the tefillin, then if he spoke after the *berachah* “*Lehoniach tefillin*” but before he had tightened the *retzuah* to the arm, he must make the *berachah* “*Lehoniach tefillin*” again.⁵⁰ However, if he spoke after he had tightened the *retzuah*, then he should finish putting

43. *Mishnah Berurah* 27:38.

44. See *Shulchan Aruch HaRav*, 25:23, 30:3; *Mishnah Berurah* 26:3.

45. *Shulchan Aruch HaRav*, 25:32.

46. *Parshas Vaes'chanan*.

47. *HaRav* 25:6-8.

48. *Shulchan Aruch HaRav*, 25:18-20.

49. *Biur Halachah* 25; *Kitzos HaShulchan* 8:9.

50. *Kitzos HaShulchan* *ibid*.

on the *shel yad* and then make the *berachah* “*Al Mitzvas tefillin*” on the *shel rosh*.⁵¹

2. If he heard *Kaddish*, *Borchu* or *Kedushah* between putting on the *shel yad* and the *shel rosh*, then he should answer:

1. “*Amen, Yehai Shemai Rabbah etc.*,”

2. *Amen* at the end of half-*kaddish*,

3. After *Borchu* he should say, “*Boruch Hashem Hamvorach Leolam Voed*”,

4. If the *Tzibbur* says “*Modim*” he should say the three words, “*Modim Anachnu Loch*” (but no more than this).⁵²

5. If he heard someone saying the blessings over the Torah, he should respond “*Boruch Hashem Hamvorach Leolam Voed*” and *Amen* after “*Nosain HaTorah*.”

6. *Amen* after the blessings “*HaE-l HaKodosh*” and “*Shomea Tefillah*”, (but no other *Amen*).

7. If he heard thunder, he should make the blessing “*Shekocho Ugevuroso Malei Olom*,”⁵³

(that is, those interruptions which may be made during the blessings of *Kerias Shema*⁵⁴) and then make the *berachah* “*Al Mitzvas tefillin*” on the *shel rosh*.⁵⁵

3. When putting on tefillin of *Rabbeinu Tam*⁵⁶ one should, again, not interrupt between putting on the *shel yad* and the *shel rosh*. However, one may answer *Kaddish*, *Borchu*, *Kedushah* and *Amen* to all blessings,⁵⁷ however one may not say “*Boruch Hu U'voruch Shemo*.”⁵⁸

51. *Shulchan Aruch HaRav*, 25:23, *Siddur HaRav*.

52. *Shulchan Aruch HaRav*, 66:5, *Siddur HaRav*.

53. *Shulchan Aruch HaRav*, 66:4.

54. See *Kitzos HaShulchan* 8:9.

55. *Siddur HaRav*. Although the wording in the *Siddur* is “it is permitted to answer” however see *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. XV, p. 185, where the Rebbe proves that it is obligatory to answer. See *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. IV, p. 147 that this is an occasion where the Alter Rebbe in *Siddur* differs from his ruling in *Shulchan Aruch* (25:21) and we rule in practice like the *Siddur* for it was the later ruling.

56. Or on any occasion where the interruption will not cause an additional blessing, such as when one took the tefillin of *Rashi* off for a few moments with intention to put them back on. See *Shulchan Aruch HaRav*, 25:29.

57. *Shulchan Aruch HaRav*, 25:22.

58. See *Kitzos HaShulchan* 8:22.

REMOVING THE TEFILLIN

1. One first removes the three coils of the tefillin *shel yad* from the finger and two or three coils⁵⁹ from the arm. One then removes the tefillin *shel rosh* with one's left hand,⁶⁰ and thereafter the rest of the tefillin *shel yad*. The tefillin are removed while standing.⁶¹

2. The tefillin should be kissed when they are removed.⁶² When removing the tefillin *shel rosh*, one should look at the letters “*Shin*” written on the tefillin.⁶³

3. The *retzuos* of the tefillin should not be wrapped around the *bayis* itself but at the side of the *bayis*. The *bayis* should be held in the hand and the *retzuah* wrapped around the *bayis* (and not the other way round). Some people have the custom of wrapping the *retzuos* in the shape of “wings of a dove” (two tracks on either side).⁶⁴

4. The tefillin *shel rosh* should be placed on the right hand side of the tefillin bag, and the tefillin *shel yad* on the left slightly higher than the *shel rosh* so that when opening the bag one will remove the *shel yad* first.⁶⁵

5. Some have the custom that the “*daled*” knot of the *shel rosh* should be placed on the *maavarta* and not beneath it.⁶⁶

6. The tefillin should only be removed after the entire *Tefillah* is finished that is, after “*Ach tzaddikim.*”⁶⁷ If there is a *bris* in shul, one should leave the tefillin on until after the *Bris*.⁶⁸

59. *Ashkavta D'Rebbe* writes that the Rebbe Rashab used to remove the first four coils.

60. See *Shulchan Aruch HaRav*, 28:3,5; *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch*, 10:20. A left handed person should remove them with his right hand. The removal of the tefillin with the left hand is to indicate that it is difficult to remove the tefillin and so that they should not be removed quickly.

61. *Reshimos* of year 5703.

62. *Shulchan Aruch HaRav*, 28:10. See also *Likkutei Dibburim*, Vol. IV, p. 1189.

63. *Heichal Menachem*, Vol. II, p. 210.

64. *Shulchan Aruch HaRav*, 28:7. See *Shevach Yikor* p. 46 note 13 in the name of Rabbi Y. L. Groner that he heard from the Rebbe in the name of the Previous Rebbe that the “wings” should be made on both the *shel yad* and the *shel rosh*.

65. *Shulchan Aruch HaRav*, *ibid.* 8. *Shevach Yikor ibid.*, notes that this is how the Rebbe placed the tefillin in the bag.

66. *Aruch HaShulchan*, 28:8.

67. *Sefer HaMinhagim*. See *HaYom Yom*, entry for 19 Menachem Av the procedure for those who lay four pairs of tefillin. For those who lay only *Rashi's* and *Rabbeinu*

7. On Rosh Chodesh, the tefillin are removed after “*Uva LeTzion*.” One then lays tefillin of Rabbeinu Tam, and then the *Shliach Tzibbur* says a *kappitel* of *Tehillim*, half-*kaddish* and *Mussaf*.⁶⁹ If one is still wearing the tefillin by *Mussaf*, then one should lift up the tefillin *shel rosh* (or cover it with a *Tallis*) when “*Kesser*” is said in *Kedushah*.⁷⁰

8. If one wishes to remove the tefillin for a short while, then he should have in mind when removing them that he will shortly be putting them on again, and he is not required to make another blessing when he does so. However, if when removing the tefillin, he had in mind to put them on again in two or three hours time, then if he removed the tefillin, even if he changed his mind and wants to put them back on immediately, he must recite another blessing.⁷¹

9. If one went to the bathroom, another blessing must be made when putting the tefillin on again, regardless of the length of the break. (It is prohibited to wear the tefillin in the bathroom).⁷²

10. It was customary among *chassidim* to say a portion of *Tanach* while putting away *tallis* and tefillin. This was done systematically so that over a period of three months they would go through the entire *Tanach*.⁷³

TACHANUN

When saying *Tachanun*, during *Shacharis*, one rests the head on the right arm out of respect to the tefillin, whereas during *Minchah*, one rests the head on the left arm.⁷⁴

Tam's, it is also customary to say the portion of *Tehillim* as divided into the days of the month in the tefillin of *Rashi*.

68. *Shulchan Aruch HaRav*, 25:38.

69. *Siddur HaRav; Sefer HaMinhagim*. See *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. II, p. 51; Vol. XX, p. 283; *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. XIX, p. 458.

70. *Me'Asef LeChol HaMachanos* 25:136.

71. *Shulchan Aruch HaRav*, 25:29. For the time period of 2 to 3 hours, see *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. III, p. 210.

72. *Ibid.* 30. See however *Kitzos HaShulchan*, 8:18.

73. *Hayom Yom*, entry for 19 Adar Rishon.

74. *Shulchan Aruch HaRav*, 131:1.

BORROWING TEFILLIN

1. It is permitted to borrow another persons tefillin without his knowledge under the following conditions:

a. It should only be done in an emergency but not on a regular basis.⁷⁵

b. He should return them as he found them.⁷⁶

c. He may not remove them from the place where he found them. For example, if he finds them in *shul*, he may not take them home. (This holds true even if he fully intends to return them to the place where he found them).⁷⁷

d. The owner is not present — for if he is present, one must ask him for permission.

If one knows for sure that the owner will object to their being borrowed, it is prohibited to borrow them.⁷⁸

2. If one borrows a pair of tefillin and the circumference of the *shel rosh* is too big or too small, the size may be adjusted,⁷⁹ but one should be careful to readjust it to its original size when the tefillin are returned. When changing the size, one should have in mind that he is doing it “*l’sheim mitzvas tefillin.*”

A LEFT HANDED PERSON

A left-handed person who does all his work with his left hand, should put tefillin on his right hand.⁸⁰ An ambidextrous person, that is, one who can use both hands equally well, should put tefillin on his left hand.⁸¹ There are very many details in these *halachos*, such as the case of one who writes with his left hand but does all other work with his right, and so on. In *all cases* one should consult a *Rav* as to the correct procedure.

75. *Shulchan Aruch HaRav*, 14:10,12.

76. That is, if they were wrapped, he must wrap them — but not necessarily exactly as they were wrapped when he took them out — *Shulchan Aruch HaRav, ibid.* 9.

77. *Ibid.*

78. *Mishnah Berurah* 14:13.

79. See *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. X, p. 378.

80. *Shulchan Aruch HaRav*, 27:9.

81. *Ibid.*

CHOL HAMOED

The *Chabad* custom is that tefillin are not worn on *Chol HaMoed*.⁸² It is permitted to pray in a *shul* on *Chol HaMoed* without tefillin, even when most people in the *shul* are wearing tefillin.⁸³

THE HOLINESS OF THE TEFILLIN

1. It is prohibited to remove one's mind from the tefillin the entire time they are being worn. Therefore one may not joke or engage in idle conversation when wearing tefillin.⁸⁴ Rather he should be filled with *yiras shomayim* and treat the tefillin with great respect. Whenever one thinks of the tefillin, one should touch them, first the *shel yad* and then the *shel rosh*.⁸⁵

One who is wearing tefillin should think no *machshavos zoros* (inappropriate thoughts). One must strive to be filled with *yiras shamayim*, and to resist all distracting thoughts. The main thing is to accept *malchus shamayim* with *kedushah*.⁸⁶

2. There are a number of places during *Tefillah* that it is customary to kiss the tefillin:

1. In "*Ashrei*" (both in *Pesukei D'Zimrah* and before *Uva LeTzion*) when saying the verse, "*Poseach Es Yodecha*" one touches the *shel yad*, and when saying "*Umasbia L'chol Chai Ratzon*" one touches the *shel rosh*.⁸⁷

2. In the blessing "*Yotzer Or*," on the words "*Yotzer Or*" one touches the *shel yad*, and on the words "*Uvorei Choshech*" the *shel rosh*.

3. In *Shema*, (both in the first and second paragraphs) on the words, "*Ukshartam* etc." one touches the *shel yad* and when saying "*V'hayoo L'totafos* etc." the *shel rosh*.

82. See *Kitzos HaShulchan* 8:1.

83. *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. V, p. 94.

84. *Shulchan Aruch HaRav*, 28:1, *Siddur HaRav*.

85. *Ibid.* 2.

86. *Shulchan Aruch HaRav*, 38:4, *Mishnah Berurah*, 38:14.

87. *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. XVIII, p. 265, *Sefer HaMinhagim*.

4. In the *Parshah* of *Kadesh* and *Vehayah Ki Yeviacha*, on the words, “*Vehayah Lecha Le’os* etc.” one touches the *shel yad*, and when saying “*Ulezikoron bein einecha*” the *shel rosh*.

Some people have the custom to touch the tefillin with the *retzuah* or with the *tallis* and then kiss the *retzuah* (or *tallis*).⁸⁸

3. If the tefillin fall on the ground without their cover it is customary to fast.⁸⁹

4. One should be careful not to let the *retzuos* of the tefillin trail on the ground.⁹⁰

5. It is prohibited to pass wind while wearing tefillin.⁹¹

6. It is prohibited to enter a bathroom wearing tefillin.⁹² If one is afraid to leave the tefillin outside the bathroom for fear they may be stolen, then they should be placed in two coverings, (one of which should not be the usual covering for the tefillin,) and then one may bring them in the bathroom.⁹³

7. One may not eat a meal while wearing tefillin but it is permitted to eat and drink a small amount, that is, smaller than the amount of an egg.⁹⁴

8. It is forbidden to sleep in tefillin.⁹⁵

TEFILLIN OF *RABBEINU TAM*

1. The *mitzvah* of tefillin is mentioned four times in the Torah, and it is these four *Parshiyos* that are written on parchment and placed inside the tefillin. However there is a difference of opinion as to the order in which they are to be placed.

According to *Rashi*, in the tefillin *shel rosh* (if you were standing facing a person wearing tefillin) then starting on the

88. *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. XVIII, p. 265. The Rebbe used to kiss the tefillin with his hand in the following way: He placed his middle three fingers on the *shel yad*, and then on the *shel rosh*, he then put his second and fourth fingers on his eyes and then kissed the middle finger — *Minhagei Melech*.

89. *Shulchan Aruch HaRav*, 44:2.

90. *Aruch HaShulchan*, 40:1.

91. *Shulchan Aruch HaRav*, 37:2.

92. *Shulchan Aruch HaRav*, 43:6.

93. *Ibid.* 5.

94. *Shulchan Aruch HaRav*, 40:11, *Kitzos HaShulchan* 8:15.

95. See details in *Shulchan Aruch HaRav*, 44:1.

right (which is the left of the person wearing the tefillin) the order is:

1. *Kadesh*
2. *Vehayah Ki Yeviacha*
3. *Shema*
4. *Vehayah im Shomoa*

According to *Rabbeinu Tam*, the order is:

1. *Kadesh*
2. *Vehayah Ki Yeviacha*
3. *Vehayah im Shomoa*
4. *Shema*

In the tefillin *shel yad*, although all four *parshiyos* are written on one piece of parchment, the same argument applies.⁹⁶

2. The *Shulchan Aruch*⁹⁷ states that the custom is to wear the tefillin of *Rashi*, for this is the main opinion. However since, according to *Rabbeinu Tam*, the tefillin of *Rashi* are invalid, with the result that one who only wears the tefillin of *Rashi* has never truly fulfilled the *mitzvah* of tefillin according to *Rabbeinu Tam*, a G-d fearing person should wear both *Rashi* and *Rabbeinu Tam*. The *AriZal* showed how both opinions are valid, kabbalistically.⁹⁸

The *Minhag Chabad*⁹⁹ is to lay both *Rashi* and *Rabbeinu Tam* tefillin starting from the time one first lays the tefillin that is,

96. *Shulchan Aruch HaRav*, 34:1-3. Even according to *Rabbeinu Tam*, the *parshiyos* must be written in their order in the Torah, however *Vehayah im Shomoa* must be placed inside the tefillin before *Shema*. In the tefillin *shel yad*, a blank space should be left, and then *Shema* should be written at the end, and then *Vehayah im Shomoa* filled in the blank. If any of the *parshiyos* were mixed up and put in the wrong place the tefillin are invalid both according to *Rashi* and *Rabbeinu Tam*.

97. *HaRav* 34:4. And although the Alter Rebbe writes that one should only lay *Rabbeinu Tam* tefillin publicly if one is stringent in all other areas of *Halachah*, otherwise it would look as if one is being arrogant since everybody else only wears *Rashi*, however see *Birkei Yosef* quoted in *Shaarei Teshuvah* 34:2 who writes that since nowadays many have the custom of wearing *Rabbeinu Tam*, there is no arrogance attached, and on the contrary, may a blessing be bestowed on all who wear them — *Aruch HaShulchan*, 34:5. See also *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. II, p. 507.

98. *Shaar HaKavannos Derush* 6 of tefillin. There it is explained that tefillin of *Rashi* are *Mochin D'Imma*, and tefillin of *Rabbeinu Tam* are *Mochin D'Abba*. See *Reshimos* on tefillin printed in *Kfar Chabad* No. 820.

99. See *Sefer HaSichos* 5749, Vol. 2 p. 632; *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. II, p. 507. See also *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. XXVI, p. 404 where the Rebbe explains that the aim of the *mitzvah* of tefillin is to subjugate the mind and heart to *Hashem*, and in this dark

that is to say, two months before the Bar Mitzvah. When saying the *berachah* over the tefillin of *Rashi* one should also have in mind the tefillin of *Rabbeinu Tam*.

3. It is the *Minhag Chabad* to wear *Rashi* tefillin for the entire duration of the *tefillah*, and after the daily portion of *Tehillim* has been recited, to remove the *Rashi* tefillin and put on the *Rabbeinu Tam* without a *berachah*. One then recites; *Shema*, *Vehayah im Shomoa*, *Vayomer* (*parshah* of *Tzitzis*¹⁰⁰) *Kadesh*, *Vehayah ki Yeviacha*, and then the Six Remembrances.¹⁰¹

4. It is correct that the tefillin of *Rabbeinu Tam* should be put on immediately after *Tefillah* because then it still has a connection with the blessing made on *Rashi* tefillin. However, if for any reason whatsoever this was not possible, one has until sunset to put on *Rabbeinu Tam*'s.¹⁰²

5. If by mistake one put on the tefillin of *Rabbeinu Tam* first, and with a *berachah*, instead of *Rashi*, then it depends. If one realizes immediately after making the *berachah*, and has not interrupted by saying anything unrelated to the tefillin,¹⁰³ then one should remove the tefillin of *Rabbeinu Tam* and put on the tefillin of *Rashi* without saying another *berachah*. However, if one had already started *Tefillah*, the tefillin of *Rabbeinu Tam* must be removed and a new *berachah* must be recited over the *Rashi* tefillin.¹⁰⁴ In such a case, where one thought the *Rabbeinu Tam*'s were *Rashi*'s and one then subsequently removed the *Rabbeinu Tam*'s, it is still correct to put on the *Rabbeinu Tam*'s again after the *Rashi*'s and say what is usually said in *Rabbeinu Tam*'s.¹⁰⁵

(spiritually) period where a double illumination is necessary it is correct that all should wear the tefillin of *Rabbeinu Tam*. In a letter — *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. XVII, p. 80, the Rebbe writes that putting on *Rabbeinu Tam* tefillin will add long life. See also *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. XIX, p. 442.

100. And one finishes "*A-donai Elokeichem Emes*" and it is not necessary to repeat the words "*Ani A-donai Elokeichem*" — *HaYom Yom*, *Sefer HaMinhagim*.

101. *Sefer HaMinhagim*.

102. See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. XXI, p. 358.

103. For anything related to the tefillin — such as a question, "what should I do if I have put on *Rabbeinu Tam*'s before *Rashi*?" — is not considered an interruption.

104. *Shevach Yikor* p. 55 and footnotes 15-18.

105. *Ibid*.

6. Boys usually place their two bags of tefillin in a protective bag. Some have the custom of placing the *Rabbeinu Tam's* on the left and *Rashi* on the right,¹⁰⁶ and some place *Rashi* on the left and *Rabbeinu Tam* on the right.¹⁰⁷

7. One should be careful when taking the tefillin out first to remove the *Rashi* tefillin. If by mistake *Rabbeinu Tam's* were removed first, they should be put back and *Rashi's* put on first.¹⁰⁸

8. If for whatever reason one forgot to put on *Rabbeinu Tam's*, the Rebbe would in such a case instruct him to make a thorough revision of all the laws of tefillin. If one forgets more than once, one should also learn the *Derush "Mitzvas Tefillin"* in the *Sefer "Derech Mitzvosecha"* or "*Shaar HaTefillin*" in the *Siddur*, or two or three other *maamarim* in the subject of tefillin.¹⁰⁹

9. One who wears tefillin of *Rabbeinu Tam* should learn *Chassidus* every day and be particular about *Tevilas Ezra*.¹¹⁰

BUYING AND CHECKING TEFILLIN

1. Strictly speaking, once a pair of tefillin are certified as kosher, they need never be checked. However, the correct thing is to check them for they may be affected by perspiration.¹¹¹ Tefillin that are only laid infrequently should be checked twice in seven years.¹¹² If any part of the *bayis* has been damaged, or the tefillin were submerged in water, they need to be checked. Exemplary men check their tefillin and mezuzos every year in the month of Elul, and the Rebbe writes that one should conduct oneself in accordance with this custom and publicize the custom.¹¹³

2. Not only has one who wears tefillin that are invalid not fulfilled the *mitzvah* of tefillin, he has also recited the name of *Hashem* in vain in all his blessings, which is a great sin.

106. *Shulchan Aruch Melachim* p. 338.

107. *Os Chaim* 28:3.

108. *Mishnah Berurah* 34:20.

109. *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. XXI, p. 358-9; *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. XXIII, p. 8; Vol. XVI, p. 80.

110. *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. VII, p. 310,314; Vol. VIII, p. 36; Vol. XVI, p. 18.

111. *Shulchan Aruch HaRav*, 39:11. See however the *Chayei Adam* 14:20 who writes that tefillin which are worn daily should also be checked twice in seven years.

112. Rav *ibid*.

113. *Sefer HaSichos* 5748, Vol. 2 p. 610.

Therefore one should only buy tefillin from a G-d-fearing person who can vouch for the *kashrus* of the *batim*, *parshiyos* and *retzuos*.¹¹⁴ Just as a person is particular about the clothes he wears, how much more so should he be particular in buying a pair of tefillin, to ensure that they are 100% kosher. Furthermore, the *mitzvah* should be performed in a beautiful way, that is, by making sure, that the writing is clear, on good parchment and housed in fine *batim*. It is most important that the *sofer* who writes the tefillin be G-d fearing.¹¹⁵

3. If the *bayis* is knocked and chipped, or one of the gut threads has snapped, one should consult a *Rav*. Furthermore, if the paint starts to fade, particularly on the *retzuos*, the tefillin must be repainted. It is correct always to seek advice from a *Rav* or *sofer* in this matter. Particular attention must be paid to the part of the *retzuah* that enters the *bayis*, a spot where the ink easily fades.

4. It is *Minhag Chabad* that the size of the tefillin be 4x4 fingers.¹¹⁶ One should also buy a pair of tefillin that has the shape of the Alter Rebbe's "*Shin*." The *parshiyos* should be in the writing of the AriZal/Alter Rebbe.

5. The *retzuos* should be at least 1cm wide and *b'shaas hadchak* 9mm.¹¹⁷

THE TEFILLIN CAMPAIGN

Before the Six Day War in June 1967, the Rebbe announced "*Mivtza tefillin*" — the "tefillin Campaign" — that every effort should be made to put on tefillin with as many Jews as possible. Our Sages say that the verse, "And all the nations of the earth shall see that the name of G-d is called upon you, and they shall fear you," is a reference to tefillin. When the

114. *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch*, 10:11.

115. *Ibid*.

116. *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. XI, p. 306. See also *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. XIII, p. 251 — what to do in case of a conflict between large tefillin and correct positioning. See also *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. XIV, p. 510 that the height of the tefillin should be the same as their length.

117. *Shiurei Torah* of R. C. Noeh p. 274. Care should be taken that the *retzuah* that enters the *bayis* should also be the correct size.

nations see the name of *Hashem* inscribed on the tefillin *shel rosh*, they shall be imbued with fear.

The worldwide Chabad community was immediately activated and many thousands of Jews put on tefillin — many for the first time in their lives. Special efforts were made to put on tefillin with soldiers in the Israeli Defense Forces. In retrospect, this can be said to have had an immense effect, the war being won miraculously in six days.

Subsequently, the Rebbe urged that the campaign be intensified, leading to the operation of Mitzvah Tanks, tefillin booths etc., worldwide. Since the inception of the campaign, tens of thousands of Jews have started to put on tefillin regularly. At the age of Bar Mitzvah, when a boy receives his own pair of tefillin, it is correct and meritorious that he should use these tefillin to lay tefillin with another Jew.

The Rebbe spoke about the campaign on numerous occasions and wrote expansively of its merit. Presented here is a very brief selection of his directives.

1. In the merit of the *mitzvah* of tefillin, soldiers will be victorious in battle and they will be granted long life.¹¹⁸

2. It is well known that in the Second World War, the Previous Rebbe advised many soldiers to put on tefillin daily. All those who sought his blessing and accepted his advice returned safely from the battlefield.¹¹⁹

3. A head that wears tefillin thinks like a Jew, a heart which is close to tefillin feels like a Jew and a hand upon which tefillin are strapped keeps itself far from bad deeds and continuously does good deeds — acts as a Jew.¹²⁰

4. Wearing tefillin protects a person from danger.¹²¹

5. Putting on tefillin has the effect of protecting oneself, one's family, and all one's possessions, and adds increased blessing in livelihood and health.¹²²

6. A person who does not put on tefillin because “he has no time,” because he is too involved with “making a living,” can

118. See for example; *Heichal Menachem*, Vol. 1, p. 138; *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. IV, p. 301.

119. *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. IX, p. 240.

120. *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. I, p. 103.

121. Quoted in many *Igros Kodesh*.

122. Quoted in many *Igros Kodesh*, see for example *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. XIX, p. 168.

be compared to one who says that he has no time to go out to make a living because he is too busy thinking about the fact that he has no income!¹²³

7. On numerous occasions when there was a medical problem, the Rebbe advised that the tefillin be checked to make sure that they were kosher.¹²⁴

8. The aim of the campaign is not just to lay tefillin with a Jew once and no more, rather he should be so moved and aroused that he will lay tefillin every day.¹²⁵

9. The Baal Shem Tov said that a soul may descend to this world for no other reason than to do a favor for another Jew. It could be that putting on tefillin once with another Jew was the reason for the descent of one's own soul — who can tell!¹²⁶

10. The Rebbe once said regarding young men who learn in *Kollel*: when the tefillin campaign was first announced, the intention was not that one should close shop and do *mitzvoim* all day — but that, instead of taking a rest or reading the papers, one should utilize that time to lay tefillin with another Jew.¹²⁷

11. The Campaign must be waged joyously and in ways both pleasant and peaceful.¹²⁸

12. The campaign must be conducted in the spirit of “one *mitzvah* draws another”, that is to say, the act of laying tefillin once will definitely lead to another *mitzvah* and another *mitzvah*, ad infinitum.¹²⁹

13. “Say to a Jew — “Listen, I am not asking you for money — I am not asking you for a favor — I just want you to put on tefillin. Do me a favor, do yourself a favor, do a favor for your parents and grandparents and all your ancestors until our forefather Yaakov, and do a favor for all your children and all generations until *Mashiach!*”¹³⁰

123. *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. XVII, p. 70.

124. See for example, *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. IX, p. 105; Vol. XII, p. 57; Vol. XV, p. 114.

125. *Sefer Hisvaadiyos 5744*, p. 2493.

126. *Sichos Kodesh 5741, Parshas Yisro*, p. 302.

127. *Heichal Menachem*, Vol. I, p. 228.

128. *Sefer Hisvaadiyos 5744*, p. 756; *Sichos Kodesh 5741*, p. 287.

129. *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. V, p. 226.

130. *Sichah of Shabbos Parshas Pinchos 5710* printed in *Torah Menachem*, Vol. I, p. 146; *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. XVIII, p. 481.

14. Sometimes if you ask a Jew to lay tefillin and you tell him of the reward promised in the World to Come, he does not understand. So tell him that laying tefillin is a form of physical protection — for a person should always do a *mitzvah*, even for the wrong reasons, and eventually he will do it for the correct reasons.¹³¹

15. Women may participate in the tefillin Campaign by donating a pair of tefillin for use in the campaign. They may also urge their husbands, fathers, brothers and sons to be involved with the campaign.¹³²

16. A *shliach* once wrote to the Rebbe to the effect that a certain individual absolutely refused to put on tefillin, and the *shliach* asked for the Rebbe's advice. The Rebbe replied that he should explain to the man that it is human nature to change one's viewpoint and perspective on many issues after a period of ten years — people change. After a period of ten years, it may be that one's attitude to tefillin will change and what then? — there will only be great upset that tefillin were not laid for the past ten years — this cannot be retrieved. The *shliach* explained this to the man and the latter agreed to lay tefillin.

A similar story is told concerning a Holocaust survivor who refused to lay tefillin. The *shliach* asked the Rebbe how he should reply to him. The Rebbe's advice was that that he should explain to that Jew that by not laying tefillin he was doing exactly what the Nazis (may their name be blotted out) wanted. Upon hearing this, the Jew immediately put on tefillin.¹³³



131. *Sefer Hisvaadiyos* 5742, p. 1809.

132. *Sichah* 19 Kislev 5728.

133. *Sefer Tefillin and Bar Mitzvah* by Z. Riterman p. 213.

Chapter 5

THE MAAMAR

The Maamar Issa B'Midrash Tehillim was recited by the Rebbe Rashab (the fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe) on the occasion of his Bar Mitzvah. It was also one of the discourses recited by the Previous Rebbe on his Bar Mitzvah. It is customary among Lubavitcher families for the Bar Mitzvah boy to recite this Maamar.

The Maamar was originally translated into English by Rabbi E. Touger. In this printing, explanatory notes have been added. Much of the explanatory material has been gleaned from the book, "Tefillin B'Mishnas Chabad" of Rabbi Y. Green, (Kfar Chabad 5757).

It is our hope that this Maamar will now become more accessible both to the Bar Mitzvah boy and to his audience. Most important is that the theme of the Maamar—the cosmic importance of the Mitzvah of tefillin—should bring blessing on the Jewish people.

1. In the Midrash Tehillim it is written:

In the first chapter of *Tehillim* 1:2, *Dovid HaMelech* writes: "Praised is the man who does not go in the counsel of the wicked, and in the ways of the sinners he does not stand, and in the company of scoffers he does not sit, for only the Torah of *Hashem* is his desire and in his Torah he labors day and night." On this verse, the *Midrash* comments.

"Rabbi Eliezer declared: Israel said to the Holy One, blessed be He — "Master of the world, we want to labor in the study of Torah by day and by night, but we lack the opportunity."¹ The Holy One blessed be He replied, "Fulfill the mitzvah of tefillin, and I will consider it as if you had labored in Torah study by day and night."

1. Originally printed in *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5708, p. 271, the reason given for this lack of opportunity is because of the difficulties in making a living.

The mandate to study day and night is first mentioned by *Yehoshua* 1:8, “This Book of the Torah shall not depart from your mouth; rather you should contemplate it day and night in order to observe and do according to all that is written in it,” and is reiterated by *Dovid Hamelech*.

On the opening verse of the Torah, “*Bereishis boro Elokim*,” *Rashi* comments that the word “*Bereishis*” may be read, “*Beis-Reishis*” meaning — for two things was the world created; for Israel and Torah. Israel’s study of Torah and his desire to study day and night therefore represents the fulfillment of the purpose of creation.

Although there is a mandate to labor in the study of Torah by day and night, the *Shulchan Aruch* explains that this mandate depends on the circumstances of the individual. There are those who must comply with this literally, and there are others who must go out to work for a living, and who must therefore have fixed times for study by day and by night. In circumstances of extreme difficulty, one can fulfill this obligation by learning “one chapter by day and one by night.”²

When the *Midrash* quotes the words of those who say that we do not have the opportunity to study, it speaks not of those who do not wish to study, rather it speaks of those who do wish to study but who must go to work. It is to such a person that the *Midrash* addresses the words: “Fulfill the mitzvah of tefillin and I will consider it as if you had labored in Torah study by day and night.”

We must understand how the fulfillment of the mitzvah of tefillin can exempt the Jewish people from the study of Torah. How are these mitzvos connected with each other?

Obviously, if one mitzvah can be substituted for another, an intrinsic relationship between them must exist.

To understand this concept, we must first appreciate another principle. It is written: “He tells His words to Yaakov, His statutes and His ordinances to Israel.” On this verse, the *Midrash*³ comments: “There are those who give

2. See *Shulchan Aruch HaRav, Hilchos Talmud Torah. Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. XIV, p. 21; *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. IV, p. 1365.

3. *Shmos Rabbah* 30:9.

commands to others to fulfill, but do not fulfill them themselves. However, what G-d commands to others He fulfils Himself, as the verse declares: “He tells *His* words to Yaakov, *His* statutes and *His* ordinances...”

that is to say, the word “*His*” implies that He Himself fulfills Torah equally. *Hashem* is unlike a king of flesh and blood. A mortal king gives commands to others but does not carry them out himself, whereas, *Hashem* what He tells others to do, He does Himself.⁴

*Chassidus*⁵ explains that there are two ways in which *Hashem* may perform a *mitzvah*.

a) First *Hashem* keeps the *mitzvah*, and only then does He tell Israel to do it. The fact that He keeps the *mitzvah* creates the potential for Israel to keep it. This may be compared to an arousal from above that precedes an arousal from below.

b) By keeping their *mitzvos*, Israel cause *Hashem* to keep it. This may be compared to an arousal from below that precedes an arousal from Above.

The *Midrash* can be interpreted to mean: Who causes G-d to fulfill the *mitzvos*? — The Jewish people. The Jewish people’s performance of *mitzvos* causes G-d to observe those same *mitzvos*. Hence, when the Jewish people put on tefillin, G-d is caused to put on tefillin.

In this *Maamar*,⁶ what is being stressed is the second way, that is to say, through Israel keeping a *mitzvah*, *Hashem* is caused to keep a *mitzvah*. Therefore the laying of tefillin by Israel causes *Hashem* to lay tefillin.

This explanation is consonant with the teaching of the Maggid of Mezritch on the *Mishnah*,⁷ “Know what is above you.” The Maggid explains that the *Mishnah* may be understood in the sense that “what is above you” is “from you”

4. See *Talmud Yerushalmi, Rosh Hashanah* 1:3.

5. *Sefer HaMaamarim Meluket*, Vol. II, p. 6.

6. See *Maamar Issa B’Midrash Tehillim Shabbos Parshas Pinchas* 5728, Ch. 2.

7. *Avos* 2:1.

that is to say, engendered by you. All that transpires in the Supernal realms originates from a person below.⁸

A person must always bear this in mind. His actions have cosmic significance. How great are Israel that they can have such an effect!⁹

Our Sages declare: “What is written in the tefillin of the Master of the universe? “And who is like Your people, like Israel, one nation on earth.” Thus, when G-d puts on tefillin, He raises the stature of the Jewish people.

The fact that *Hashem* lays tefillin is already quoted in the Talmud *Berachos* 6a:

R. Abin, son of R. Ada, in the name of R. Isaac says: How do you know that *Hashem* puts on tefillin? For it is said,¹⁰ “*Hashem* has sworn by His right hand, and by the arm of His strength.” “By His right hand”, this is the Torah, for it is said,¹¹ “At His right hand was a fiery law unto them.” “And by the arm of His strength,” this is the tefillin, as it is said,¹² “*Hashem* will give strength to His people....”

R. Nachman ben Isaac said to R. Hiya ben Abin: What is written in the tefillin of *Hashem*? He replied to him: “*And who is like Your people Israel, a nation one in the earth.*”¹³ Does then *Hashem* sing the praises of Israel? — Yes, for it is written,¹⁴ “*You have avouched the L-rd this day... and the L-rd has avouched you this day.*” *Hashem* said to Israel, “You have made Me a unique entity in the world, and I shall make you a unique entity in the world.”

8. See *Sefer HaMaamarim Meluket* Vol. I, p. 431. This idea is also reflected in the teaching of the Baal Shem Tov on the verse, “*Hashem* is your shadow” (*Tehillim* 121:5). The Baal Shem Tov explains — you are always followed by your shadow — when you move your shadow moves. *Hashem* is your shadow: All your moves are reflected by *Hashem*. If you lay tefillin, *Hashem* lays tefillin — See *Sefer HaMaamarim Meluket*, Vol. II, p. 91.

9. See *Sefer HaMaamarim Meluket*, Vol. I, p. 61.

10. *Yeshayahu* 62:8.

11. *Devarim* 33:2.

12. *Tehillim* 29:2.

13. *I Divrei HaYomim* 17:21.

14. *Devarim* 26:17,18.

The *Maharsha*¹⁵ explains that when a Jew puts on tefillin, he causes that *Hashem* should praise and be proud of Israel. Just as a crown worn on the head adorns the head, so too the tefillin are the crown of the Jew. This crown brings beauty to the wearer of the crown. It therefore follows that when *Hashem* puts on tefillin, that is, sings the praises of His people, He then raises the stature of the people.¹⁶

This concept can be explained¹⁷ in terms of the verse,¹⁸ “Look down from Your holy abode, from heaven, and bless Your people Israel.”

The *Maamar* will soon explain that this looking down from the perspective of “heaven” allows *Hashem* to view the people in a favorable light and bless them.

Now it is written:¹⁹ “G-d is high above all nations” “He is uplifted”, and in relation to His essence, the verse²⁰ declares, “If you have sinned how have you affected Him? If you are righteous what do you give Him or what does He receive from your hand?” All the higher and lower realms are considered as nothing before Him.

When *Hashem* created the world, He created a “*Seder Hishtalshelus*” — a chain order of creation” higher worlds and lower worlds. The Hebrew word “*olam*” which means a world has its root in the word “*he’elem*” meaning a concealment. Any “*olam*” may be defined as an area of *Hashem’s* concealment. In the higher worlds, there is only a very slight concealment, *Hashem’s* presence is manifest. Whereas in the lower worlds, *Hashem’s* presence is more strongly concealed. In this world, the lowest of all worlds, which is to say that it is the place of greatest concealment, *Hashem’s* presence is almost totally concealed. We can only “see” Him through the wonders of

15. *Chidushei Aggados, ibid.*

16. See *Sefer HaMaamarim Meluket*, Vol. II, p. 87.

17. See *Torah Or Parshas Mikeitz*, *Maamar* “*Ki Imcha Mekor Chaim*,” and the corresponding *Maamar in Shaarei Orah*.

18. *Devarim* 26:15.

19. *Tehillim* 113:4.

20. *Iyov* 35:6,7. In his *Sichos*, the Previous Rebbe states; “When I was studying this *Maamar* by heart, I had difficulty for the citation (in Hebrew) differs slightly from the actual text of the verse. I asked my father, the Rebbe, and he told me, “Recite what it says.”

nature and the Torah. The terms “higher” and “lower” worlds denote a spiritual level rather than any physical entity.²¹

Compared to the essence of *Hashem* — in *Chassidus* called *Atzmus* — all the worlds are considered as nothing, for in truth the only true and real existence is *Hashem* Himself. The concealment of the worlds is only from the perspective of the creations.²²

This concept is alluded to in the verse:²³ “for His name is sublimely transcendent,” only its glory, its radiance and reflection shine on the earth and heaven. [In this context, we can understand the *Zohar’s* expression,] “when G-d rose to the heights;” that is, when the G-dly life-energy rose up from the [limited] radiance, that shines “on the earth and heaven,” level after level upward, to its source [in G-d’s essence]. At that level the worlds are of no importance [and therefore G-d’s control over the worlds is not manifest].

The revealed part of *Hashem* that is manifest in the worlds is called a “*ziv*” or “*ha’oroh*” — meaning a ray of light. A single ray of light that goes out of the sun is nothing compared to the sun itself. So too, the ray of G-dliness that illuminates the worlds is nothing compared to *Atzmus*. This ray is called in *Chassidus* “His name.”

To go one step further, the level of G-dliness felt in the lower worlds is only a “ray of a ray” in other words, only a fraction of the G-dliness of “His name.” “His name” represents a truly exalted level, “for His name is sublimely transcendent.”

If this world is created from a “ray of a ray” and “His name” is an exalted level of G-dliness, and the level of “His name” is in turn nothing compared to *Atzmus*, it follows that *Atzmus* itself is infinitely higher and more removed from all the worlds, and all the worlds are considered as naught in relation to *Atzmus*.²⁴

21. See *Likkutei Torah*, *Shmos* 3a; *Bamidbar* 70c; *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5654, p. 149.

22. The creation of the worlds creates no change in the Creator at all — not in their actual creation nor in their functioning — See *Tanya*, Chs. 20, 36.

23. *Tehillim* 148:13.

24. See *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5687, p. 98.

Now, in the case of a king of flesh and blood, there are times when he is fully aware of every single detail — no matter how small in the kingdom. But there are other times when the King is closed off for himself and aloof from his subjects.

In *Mishlei* (30:28) it states, “The spider seizes (its prey) with its handiwork, though it dwells in the Kings palace.” The spider, even though it is not difficult to catch and throw away, spins its web on the walls of a house. When the King is in a detached frame of mind, the spider can even spin its web on the wall of his palace — the King will neither notice nor be bothered. He is absorbed in himself, and the spider makes no difference to him.

So too is it with *Hashem*. Sometimes *Hashem* is totally absorbed with “matters of state” — even down to the minutest detail. However, on occasion, “G-d is high above all nations,” He is totally absorbed in Himself. At such a time, He “pays not attention” to the goings on in the worlds (although at the very same moment He is creating all the worlds, creation from nothing every single second — and if He were, G-d forbid, even for one moment to suspend this creative energy the world would cease to exist — nonetheless, this is only an external motion — internally *Hashem* is absorbed in His own essence.) On this level, it matters not to Him whether the creations are doing His will or sinning against Him. This is the meaning of the verse, “If you have sinned, how have you affected him.”²⁵

He does not however abandon the worlds entirely; rather, as the *Maamar* explains by means of analogy, He controls the worlds as if in a state of sleep.

The state of sleep is used as a metaphor to describe this aspect. When a person sleeps, his mind rises above its vessel, his body, and ascends to its source. All that remains is the power of fantasy, a mere glimmer of the mind’s original power.

Similarly, in the era of exile “when G-d rose to the heights,” His presence is not openly revealed, and only a vestige of His

25. See at length *Shaarei Orah*, *Shaar Chanukah*, Chs. 12-14.

power is felt within the world. Whereas, in reference to the redemption, the converse is the case.

We find expressions like, “And G-d awoke as one awaking out of sleep”²⁶ and, “Awake, why are You sleeping, O’ G-d.”²⁷ For [when G-d “awakes,”] G-d’s essence and nature will be revealed in the *Sefiros* of *Chochmah* (wisdom) and *Chessed* (kindness) [and through them in the world at large]. “His countenance will shine”²⁸ that is, He will reveal His essence and His nature in all its glory, as it truly is, through the inner aspects of His will.

This state of *Hashem*, as He is when absorbed in Himself, can be compared to the state of sleep. When a person is awake, all his faculties are revealed, he thinks, sees and feels. When a person sleeps, all his soul powers ascend to their source leaving only a trace in the body.²⁹

Although being physically asleep, or awake, are only human attributes, and are not applicable to the Divine, nonetheless, they function metaphorically. When we say that *Hashem* is awake, we mean that *Hashem* is revealed to the creations; whereas, when *Hashem* appears to be asleep, He is concealed, and is oblivious to the actions of the creations.

We find the perfect example of *Hashem* “sleeping” in the *Megillah*. The Sages comment on the verse³⁰ “On that night, the sleep of the King was disturbed” that this is a reference to the King of the world — *Hashem*. But does *Hashem* sleep? When Israel sins, He appears to be sleeping, as it says, “Why do you sleep, *Hashem*?” And when Israel do *His* will — then the Guardian of Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps.³¹

From this *Midrash* we see that whether *Hashem* is asleep or awake is dependent on our actions. This is what the *Maamar* means by saying that we can “awaken” *Hashem* by doing Torah and *mitzvos*. For although “He renews every day the works of

26. *Tehillim* 78:65.

27. *Ibid.*, 44:24.

28. *Ibid.*, 67:2.

29. See *Shaarei Orach*, *Shaar Chanukah*, Chs. 13-14.

30. *Esther* 6:1.

31. See *Sefer HaMaamarim 5708*, *Maamar* of Purim Ch. 6. *Sefer HaMaamarim 5700*, *Maamar* “On that night.”

creation,” and indeed, every second of the day Divine energy pulsates into and gives life to the creation, it is Israel who, by keeping Torah and *mitzvos*, reveal that light.

How is this Divine influence to be conveyed to the world?—**through drawing down the Torah and its *mitzvos*.**

Torah and *mitzvos* are the inner will of G-d. We may distinguish between the inner and outer will of G-d by analogy with a man’s employment. When a person goes out to work, his inner will is to provide for his family. Any action that will facilitate this provision is only motivated by outer will. So it is with *Hashem*. His inner will is Torah and *mitzvos*. All the worlds are created with *Hashem*’s outer will and only facilitate Torah and *mitzvos*, the revelation of His inner will.

When *Hashem*’s inner will is fulfilled, His countenance shines. This has a very deep meaning. When a Jew keeps Torah and *mitzvos* — *Hashem*’s inner will — the light of the *Ein Sof* becomes revealed without any constraints or concealments. Keeping Torah and *mitzvos* awakens *Hashem* and His presence is openly revealed.³²

In this context we can understand the verse,³³ “Look from heaven and behold,” and the verse, “Look down from Your holy abode, from heaven.”³⁴ The Hebrew word “*Shomayim*” — heaven — is a combination of two words, “*Shom*” “*Mayim*” — meaning “There is water there.”³⁵

In Hebrew the word *Re’iyah* denotes “seeing something.” The words “*Habet*” and “*Hashkafah*” denote looking with concentration from above at what is below.³⁶

In this case — in the days of creation, the verse in *Bereishis*³⁷ states, “And G-d made the firmament and He divided between the waters which were under the firmament and the waters above the firmament and He called the firmament *Shomayim*. The firmament when seen from below is a place of water and is

32. See *Tanya*, Ch. 35.

33. *Tehillim* 80:15.

34. *Devarim* 26:15.

35. *Chagigah* 12a. See also *Rashi*, *Bereishis* 1:8.

36. See *Shaarei Orach*, *Shaar Chanukah*, Ch. 11.

37. *Bereishis* 1:6-7.

therefore termed *Shomayim*, meaning *shom* (there), *mayim* (water).

Water is a metaphor for Torah. [When the prophet Yeshayahu³⁸] declared: “Behold, all who are thirsty, go to the water,” he was referring to Torah.³⁹

Torah is compared to water, for water is the essence of all life — nothing can survive without it. *Shomayim* — there is water — also means, there is Torah. “Look from *Shomayim* etc.,” may be translated as “Look from Torah.”⁴⁰

[Thus,] through Torah [we will merit fulfillment of the verse, “Look down from Your holy abode, from heaven] and bless Your people Israel.” Torah causes G-d to view the Jewish nation as an important entity. All the essential appreciation and revelation of G-dliness comes about through the medium of the Torah, and the Torah is revealed to us.

The above verse now takes on a new meaning, “Look down from Heaven” now means — look at us from the perspective of Torah. As *Hashem* is wrapped up in His essence, nothing exists before Him. As *Hashem* looks through Torah, Israel takes on a significance, and when *Hashem* sees Israel keeping the Torah, this draws His blessing, “and bless Your people Israel.”⁴¹

Torah is the wisdom of *Hashem*. Furthermore, Torah is the embodiment of the wisdom of *Hashem* presented in a manner that people can grasp — as the verse states, “for Torah is your wisdom and understanding in the eyes of the nations” Since our entire appreciation of *Hashem* comes through Torah, it follows that when Israel keeps the Torah, and *Hashem*’s presence is revealed to them, they are worthy of *Hashem*’s blessing.⁴²

This blessing extends itself to all Israel.⁴³ However, within Israel itself, the blessing is primarily focused upon those who toil and immerse themselves in Torah, those who support their effort and those who send their children to learn Torah from

38. 55:1.

39. See *Taanis* 7a.

40. See *Maharsha, Chagigah* 12a.

41. See *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5708, p. 116.

42. *Ibid.* p. 115.

43. Since the blessing comes through Torah, it follows that the blessing only extends itself to Israel — see *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5651, p. 226; 5666, p. 244.

G-d-fearing teachers.⁴⁴ The wording in the verse, “*Amcha*” also suggests that the blessing is not limited to those who are very knowledgeable in Torah, but also extends itself to “*Amcha*” — ordinary people who keep Torah and *mitzvos* in a simple and faithful way.⁴⁵

This concept is alluded to in the verse,⁴⁶ “The heavens opened and I saw Divine visions.” The heavens [that is, the Torah] are compared to a magnifying glass,⁴⁷ through which we are seen by G-d. Just as a lens enhances the image of the object, making it seem greater and more praiseworthy than it would appear without the lens, similarly the Torah makes the Jewish people who fulfill it seem greater and more praiseworthy.

Glass is used to view images in a number of ways. The first — a mirror — is a piece of glass coated with a silver film that simply reflects the image. Glass is also used in the lens of a telescope to magnify an image. A distant object now becomes a near reality. What is seen is not only an image (as in the case of a mirror) but the object itself.

The Talmud likens the difference between the prophecy of Moshe and the other prophets to that between a mirror and a magnifying glass. Other prophets only reflected in their visions the Supernal image they were viewing. Moshe beheld a magnified image “face to face” with *Hashem*.

The way *Hashem* views the creation may also be through either a magnifying glass or through a mirror. This is the meaning of the verse, “the heavens opened and I saw Divine visions.” As previously mentioned, “heavens” in this context refers to Torah. When *Hashem* views us from the perspective of Torah the vision is clear, magnified and praiseworthy. Therefore we request, “Look from heaven and behold,” — a request to *Hashem* to look at us through the perspective of Torah, thus magnifying our image.

44. *Sefer HaMaamarim 5708*, p. 116. See also *Sefer HaMaamarim Meluket*, Vol. V, p. 192.

45. *Sefer HaMaamarim Meluket*, Vol. IV, p. 372,380. See also Vol. V, p. 192 note 35.

46. *Yechezkel* 1:1.

47. The translation of *Aspaklaria Hame'era* as a magnifying glass is taken from *Sefer HaLiklutim Tzemach Tzedek*, Vol. Aleph p. 1370. See there at length for a full discussion of these two types of glass and their comparison to *sefiros* etc.

Furthermore, what may seem to us an insignificant action, is of huge importance when seen through Hashem's magnifying glass. For example, when a small donation is given to a poor man, the donor may attach little importance to his action, whereas the heavenly storm created by this small act is immense.

The glass, however, also possesses a converse effect. Those actions which are not in tune with *Hashem's* will are also magnified and viewed with disdain.

And this is the meaning of the verse, "And who is like Your people Israel, one nation on earth."

As mentioned above, these words are written in *Hashem's* tefillin. This can be interpreted to mean that,

The Jewish people draw down oneness onto the earth. They make manifest the aspects of "G-d is one" in this lowly earth.

The above explanation on the verse, "Look down from heaven" has given us a deeper understanding as to how *Hashem* perceives us differently through the medium of the magnifying glass of Torah. This is similarly effected through our laying tefillin, which, as previously mentioned causes *Hashem* to lay tefillin.

In *Hashem's* tefillin it is written, "And who is like Your people Israel, one nation on earth."

Hashem's laying tefillin brings about great praise for the Jewish people. What aspect of Israel particularly magnifies their image and effects *Hashem's* praise for them? It is their being "one nation on earth" that is, revealing the Oneness of G-d on earth. It is specifically the Jew who is charged with the mission of revealing the essence of G-d, here, in the lowest of all realms.

The term "*Hashem Echad*" in *Chassidus* represents not only a statement of monotheism that is, there is only one G-d and no other G-d, but more than that it emphasizes that *Hashem* is in all four corners of the earth (the *daled*) in the seven heavens and the earth (the "*ches*" $7+1=8$) which are all created *ex nihilo*, out of nothing, every single second, by one G-d. In other words "*Ain Od Milvado*" — there is nothing else besides Him. It is the purpose of the Jew, through deep contemplation and

observance of the *mitzvos* to demonstrate on all levels of his experience, be it in thought speech or action that it is only the Divine energy of the one G-d that brings everything into existence.⁴⁸

II. The unique quality of Torah can be understood [from a deeper perspective] in terms of our Sages' statement, "Torah preceded the world by two thousand years."⁴⁹ That statement does not refer to chronological precedence. Both time and space are creations, and before the creation of the world, time did not exist either. Here the concept of precedence refers to a higher spiritual level. [The Torah reflects a spiritual level higher than that vested in creation.]

Upon creation, *Hashem* created the concept of time. Before creation time as we know it did not exist. This raises a problem in understanding the words of the Sages "Torah preceded the world by 2000 years," which suggests that there was a concept of time before creation. In order to resolve this problem, the *Maamar* explains that this precedence refers not to time as we know it, but to spiritual precedence, that is, the 2000 year period refers to a spiritual advantage that Torah has over the world.⁵⁰

G-d's emotional attributes are the source for the world, as alluded to in the verse,⁵¹ "For in six days G-d made [the heavens and the earth]. The Hebrew which reads "*Shaishes Yamim Assah*" — is literally translated as "six days made" The prefix "*Beis*" which means "in" was omitted. The six days refer to G-d's six emotional attributes as they underwent a great descent into the realm of *Asiyah*, the realm of action.

In order to understand this spiritual superiority and level of the Torah over the world, we must first understand that the

48. See *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5652, p. 326; *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5700, p. 142.

49. Note *Midrash Tehillim* 90:4. See also *Bereishis Rabbah* 8:2; *Midrash Tanchuma*, *Vayeishev* 4; *Zohar*, Vol. II, p. 49a.

50. See also *Likkutei Torah*, *Sukkos*, p. 81d, *Sefer HaLikkutim* entry "Zman" p. 169; *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. XIX, p. 10.

51. *Shmos* 20:11.

world itself has as its source *Hashem's* emotional attributes, His “*middos*.”

What is meant by *Hashem's middos*? “From my flesh I see G-d.” *Chassidus* teaches that *Hashem's* attributes are reflected in the human soul. Just as human emotions express feelings towards another for example, kindness to another, and so on, so too *Hashem's middos* are *Hashem's* expression of emotion vis-a-vis His creation.

The *Zohar*⁵² explains that this concept is alluded to in the account of creation. “For in six days *Hashem* made the heaven and the earth.” If the intent was to relate that *Hashem* created the world in six days, then grammatically it should have said “*B'Shaishes*” “in” six days etc. However, the wording “*Shaishes Yamim*” suggests that *Hashem* made 6 days (*middos*) which facilitated the creation.

The original level of the six emotional attributes is the realm of *Atzilus*, the realm of emanation. However, to bring about the creation of a physical world, these potentials descended into the realm of *Asiyah*.

On that basis, we can understand another statement of the *Zohar*.⁵³

The word “*Bereishis*,” the first of the ten statements of creation; is a combination of two words “*Borah Shis*” — “He created six” [a reference to G-d's six emotional attributes.]

The Sages tell us that *Hashem* created the world with Ten Utterances.⁵⁴ *Hashem* has no body or form of body, speech is only used as a metaphor for creation. When a teacher explains a concept, the number of his spoken words is small in comparison to the number of thoughts that went into his understanding of the subject. The act of speaking may therefore be analogous to a contraction of the thought process and its crystallization in words. When *Hashem* created the world it was necessary to contract His infinite power and concentrate His creative power in a limited manner. This process is analogous

52. *Zohar*, Vol. I, p. 247a; Vol. III, p. 298b. See also Responsa of *Rashba*, Vol. 1, Responsum 423.

53. *Zohar*, Vol. II, p. 3b, 15b.

54. *Avos* 5:1.

to speech, where each word is a combination of letters, each letter embodying a certain Divine power the combinations of which creates the diverse world visible to the eyes.

It must be noted that the Ten Utterances were not a one-time thing. As the Baal Shem Tov explains on the verse, “Continually *Hashem*, Your words stand in the heavens,” — the Ten Utterances continually pulsate with creative energy, and if for one moment the flow of that creative energy were to stop, the world would cease to exist.⁵⁵

The first of these utterances is “*Bereishis*.” On the face of it, this is somewhat surprising, because in the case of the other utterances the verse states, “And G-d said...” whereas in the word *Bereishis* no act of speech is mentioned. The *Zohar* explains that *Bereishis* means “*Borah Shis*,” He created six *middos*, with which He created the rest of creation. The creation therefore took place in two stages

- 1) The creation of six *middos*.
- 2) The other utterances, acts of creation by means of the *middos*.

These two stages are also alluded to in the interpretation of the verse, “The world shall be built with kindness.”

This concept can further be understood in terms of the interpretation of the verse,⁵⁶ “The world shall be built with kindness.” There are two ways to explain this verse:⁵⁷

a) The attribute of kindness was necessary for the “building” of the worlds.

Kindness is the first of the six emotional attributes. It motivates the expression of every other attribute necessary for creation. To cite an example in the personal realm: The very connection with others expressed by the other emotional qualities is an expression of kindness and love. Accordingly, the *Etz Chaim*⁵⁸ explains:

55. See *Tanya, Shaar HaYichud VahaEmunah*.

56. *Tehillim* 89:3.

57. See Commentaries of *Targum Yonasan Ben Uziel, Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Radak, Metzudas Dovid*. See also *Sefer HaMaamarim Kuntreisim*, Vol. II, p. 782.

58. *Etz Chaim, Shaar* 25 p. 2; *Pri Etz Chaim, Shaar Chag Hasukkos*, Ch. 1; *Shaar Maamarei Rashbi* for the *Parshiyos Yisro, Terumah* and *Emor; Likkutei Torah*, the third *Maamar, Haazinu* Ch. 6 and other sources.

the first day, which is symbolic of the attribute of kindness, “proceeds together with all the other days.”

In essence, all the *middos* — even that of *Gevurah* (severity) — are motivated by *Hashem’s* innate desire to do good. Therefore the *middah* of *Chessed* is often singled out as the predominant *middah*.⁵⁹

b) The attribute of kindness must itself be built.

In this context, the above expression would be read: “For the sake of the world, kindness was built.”

In a similar vein, the above expression “He created six” describes the building of the six emotional attributes in order that they, in turn, may become the source for the lower worlds, *Beriah*, *Yetzirah*, and *Asiyah*.

The above explains how *Hashem’s* emotional attributes are related to the lower worlds. They were brought into being to function as the creative agents to form those realms. The Torah by contrast reflects *Hashem’s* intellectual attributes, and exists independent of the existence of the lower realms. As mentioned above,

“The Torah preceded the world.”

Similarly, the *Zohar*⁶⁰ states:

The Torah emanates from wisdom. [That is, G-d’s] intellectual attributes, which transcend the [lower] worlds entirely.

The difference between G-d’s attributes of intellect and emotion can be discovered through analysis of the functioning of these potentials in the human realm.

The working of the intellect does not require the presence of another person. Even when one is alone, without a second person with whom to share an idea, it is possible to think intellectually. The emotions, by contrast, require an object. The attribute of kindness, for example, requires a recipient of one’s generosity and kindness. If there is no recipient, the emotion itself disappears as if it never existed. This principle is reflected in a story the Torah relates concerning Avraham.

59. See *Likkutei Torah, Haazinu*, p. 76b.

60. Vol. II, p. 121a; see also p. 85a.

He “sat at the tent door in the heat of the day”⁶¹ looking for wayfarers. He wanted to find someone to show kindness to, for without a recipient the giver loses this expressive potential.⁶²

In this way we are helped to understand the statement that Torah preceded the world by 2000 years (and as explained above, this precedence is in spiritual level). The Torah possesses spiritual superiority even over the Divine source of the worlds. The Divine creative energy that creates the worlds only emanates from the *middos* of *Hashem*, in contrast to Torah, which emanates from *Hashem*'s wisdom.

Similarly, this principle can be understood in regard to the spiritual realms.

Hashem's emotional attributes require, as it were, the existence of an entity that feels itself as separate from Him. Thus,

It is written:⁶³ “Remember Your mercies and kindnesses, for they have existed for all time.”

As *Rashi* explains — *Hashem* displayed His kindness to Adam. Originally, he had been warned, “On the day you eat (from the forbidden fruit) you will die.” *Hashem* granted Adam a full day — which in *Hashem*'s reckoning is a thousand years.

*Chassidus*⁶⁴ however focuses on the Hebrew word “*Meolam*” translated as “for all time”, which can also mean “from the world.”

G-d's mercies and kindnesses are related to the worlds. As explained in the [second] interpretation of the verse, “the world shall be built with kindness,” that kindness was built, brought into being, for the sake of creation. If there had not been a creation, the attribute of kindness would not have been required, for who would there have been to receive that kindness?

Hashem's mercy and kindness are therefore only active in the world where they find expression. A person is only called

61. *Bereishis* 18:1.

62. See further *Sefer HaMaamarim*, 5688, p. 3; 5672, p. 81; 5666, p. 112; 5698, p. 59.

63. *Tehillim* 25:6.

64. *Toras Shmuel* 5633, p. 541; *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5698, p. 58.

“merciful” or “kind” not because he has the potential to be kind or merciful but because he puts these attributes into practice. Often these terms are used by a potential recipient to draw forth kindness or mercy.⁶⁵

The implication here is that the revelation of *Hashem's middos* was conditioned upon creation. Had the world not been created, there would have been no revelation of the *middos*. Not so *mochin* which is unrelated to the worlds.⁶⁶

These concepts explain the opening statement of the *Etz Chaim*, “when it arose in His simple will to be generous to His creations.... [His Will was aroused] because G-d is good and it is the nature of the good to be bountiful.

Such will is not forced — it is an inner will in which He takes great pleasure. It stems from the fact that *Hashem* desires and has great pleasure in doing good.⁶⁷

This kindness is drawn down from the level of, “He who desires kindness.”⁶⁸ It reflects the kindness that exists in G-d’s Will.

This potential for kindness exists only at the level of G-dliness that relates to the creation of the worlds.

G-d’s intellectual attributes, by contrast, were not drawn down in the creation of the worlds.

From everything that has been said until now, it appears that the world was created by the *middos* but the *mochin* were not involved. This seemingly contradicts two quotations from the Sages that suggest that *mochin* were used in the creation.

We do, however, find references to G-d’s use of intellect in the creation. For example, our Sages declared,⁶⁹ “G-d created the world with ten qualities: with wisdom, understanding, and knowledge.”

The Talmud *Chagigah* 12a enumerates ten attributes that were employed in the creation — the first three of which are *Chochmah, Binah and Daas*. The *Maharsha* comments that the ten

65. *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5659, p. 116.

66. *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5672, p. 75,778.

67. *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5670, p. 94.

68. *Michah* 7:18.

69. *Chagigah* 12a.

attributes mentioned in the Talmud correspond to the ten *Sefiros* and the ten utterances.

In a similar vein, the *Sefer Yetzirah 1:1* states, “The world [was created] by three *Seforim*, *Sefer*, *Sofer* and *Sippur*. The *Maamar U’Shavtem*⁷⁰ explains that the level *Sofer* (scribe)⁷¹ refers to the level of wisdom and the level of *Sefer* (book) refers to the level of understanding,⁷² just as a scribe writes a book, [understanding is a product of wisdom.]

“*Sefer*” refers to *Binah*. The book contains the words that explain the concept. “*Sofer*” refers to *Chochmah* — for the scribe is the source of the wisdom written in the book. “*Sippur*” the story refers to *Daas* — for the *Sippur* links the *Sofer* and the *Sefer*. Initially *Daas* links *chochmah* and *binah*, and ultimately the purpose is to translate the entire concept into the *middos* that are the recipients of the intellect.

From both the Talmud and *Sefer Yetzirah* it is clear that intellect was employed in the creation, contradicting what was said before.⁷³

In order to resolve this difficulty, the *Maamar* explains that there are two levels of intellect. The “essence of intellect” and intellect related to the emotions. The intellect related to the emotions refers to intellectual powers that aid the emotions. They tell the emotions what to love, how to help another, and so on. The essence of intellect is pure intellect, without any relation or connection to the emotions.⁷⁴

70. *Toras Shmuel* 5633, p. 544. See also *Likkutei Torah, Devarim*, p. 80b, *Shir HaShirim*, p. 7a.

71. See the explanation of these concepts in *Likkutei Hashas of the AriZal*, commenting on *Rosh Hashanah* 16b. See also *Torah Or, Shmos, Maamar Zeh Shmi; Toras Chaim, Maamar VeAleh Shmos* (p. 17ff.); *Likkutei Torah*, the second *Maamar, Ushavtam*.

72. See *Likkutei Torah, Shir HaShirim*, p. 46c the explanation of the *Maamar, Simani Kichosem*, Ch. 3, which explains this concept as follows:

Wisdom is the beginning and source for the spiritual cosmos. From it, come forth the letters and the new existence in the *Sefer* (book) which is understanding. [This parallels the way] the essence of a concept includes the letters which come into being when the concept is drawn down into [the realm of] cognition and comprehension.

73. In *Toras Shmuel* 5634, p. 545, he explains that the Talmud and *Sefer Yetzirah* are stating the same fact only in a different style.

74. See *Derech Mitzvosecha* p. 34. It should be noted that in comparison to pure intellect, the intellect connected with emotions may be regarded as the essence of

Nevertheless, the intellectual aspects that were drawn down to the emotions [and thus into the creation] reflect a [lower] level of intellect than that which is related to the emotions.

Therefore when the Talmud *Chagigah* or *Sefer Yetzirah* refer to intellect that is employed in the act of creation, they refer to the level of intellect related to the emotions, but not to the essential intellect.

The essence of intellect, by contrast, stands above [the emotions and above creation].

From all the aforementioned, we may now fully appreciate the advantage and spiritual precedence of Torah — which stems from pure intellect — over the worlds — which stem from the *middos*. This difference is further accentuated by analyzing the number 2,000.

Torah, however, emanates from wisdom, the essence of G-d's intellect. Therefore, Torah preceded the world by 2,000 years. The number 2,000 is also significant. The Hebrew word for thousand “Aleph” is etymologically related to the word “A’alefcha” translated as “I will teach you.” Two thousand can mean two types of teaching [as stated in *Chassidus*] “I will teach you wisdom, I will teach you understanding.”⁷⁵ This further expresses how Torah represents the realm of intellect that precedes the world which is related to the realm of emotions.

The word “Aleph” has three meanings:

- a) *Aleph* is the first letter of the alphabet.
- b) “*Elef*” — meaning a thousand. The plural “*Alpayim*” means 2,000.
- c) “*Ulpana*” — meaning learning.

Combining all meanings, the word “*Alpayim*” meaning 2,000, may also mean two types of *Aleph*, two types of learning. Based on the verse in *Iyov*, these two areas of learning are *Chochmah* and *Binah*.⁷⁶ The phrase, “Torah preceded the world

the *middos*, their motivation and mentor. See *Sefer HaMaamarim Meluket*, Vol. II, p. 90.

75. *Iyov* 33:33.

76. See *Sefer Arachim Chabad* — entry “*Osios*” *Aleph*, p. 118-119.

by 2,000 years,” may now be understood to mean — the two levels of *Chochmah* and *Binah* preceded the world (whose source is *middos*). This explanation also resolves the difficulty posed at the onset, namely, that there was no concept of time before the creation. The word “*Alpayim*” does not denote time but refers to *Chochmah* and *Binah*.

III. Through the above, we can understand the original concept: “Rabbi Eliezer declared: “Israel said to the Holy One, blessed be He, ‘we want to labor in Torah study,’ for through Torah study we draw G-d’s intellectual attributes into His emotional attributes. This reflects a great and wondrous level.

Torah and *mitzvos* are not just a set of rules by which we live. In truth they are the mechanism by means of which a Jew draws the Divine light into the world. This is the main difference between the Seven Noachide laws and the 613 *mitzvos*. A non-Jew must keep the Noachide laws in order to create a stable and viable society. They are social laws. At Sinai, *Hashem* gave Israel the gift that they could draw G-dliness into the world.⁷⁷ This Divine light may be drawn into his G-dly soul, his animal soul, and into his portion in the world. It also affects the supernal realms. Each *mitzvah* has its unique effect in all these areas.

Torah learning has a unique effect. The source of Torah — as discussed above — is the level of essential intellect. When one learns Torah one causes even this level of intellect to be drawn into the *middos*. One cannot compare the Divine influx into the worlds as it is when emanating from the *middos* to when it also has the extra dimension of essential intellect. When essential intellect illuminates the *middos*, it has a great effect on the creation — what is described in the *Maamar* as a “great and wondrous level.”

The Tzemach Tzedek in *Derech Mitzvosecha*, p. 35 gives us a deeper understanding of the affect essential intellect has on the

77. See *Torah Or*, p. 68b.

middos. He quotes the Talmudic⁷⁸ dictum, “If you meet this lowlife (meaning one’s own evil inclination), drag him to the House of Study.” It may be that in the *Beis HaMidrash* the subject being studied is of no direct relevance to the disciplining of that particular inclination, however, the all-pervading aura of Torah has the effect of refining the person. So too, in cosmic terms, when Torah — *Hashem’s* essential intellect — is drawn into the world (whose source is *middos*) it affects it in a most unusual way: by refining and elevating the world with its aura.

An example may be taken from the effect of *Shabbos* on the weekdays. In the account of creation, the name of *Hashem* used during the six days is *Elokim* (which, as explained in *Chassidus*, is synonymous with nature and concealment). On *Shabbos*, “*Elokim* was finished” — the concealment of *Elokim* was finished and *Shabbos* is a day for *Hashem*. *Shabbos* gives direction, focus and purpose to the six days of the week. In relation to this *Maamar*, *Shabbos* may be seen as *Chochmah* and the week as the *middos*. The effect *Shabbos* has on the week is comparable to the drawing of essential intellect into *middos*.⁷⁹

It is this great effect that Torah learning has on the creation that explains the desire of Israel to toil in Torah day and night.

“But we don’t have the opportunity.” The Holy One, blessed be He, replied: “Fulfill the *mitzvah* of tefillin and I will consider it as if you had labored in Torah study day and night.” This is possible, for through performing the *mitzvah* of tefillin, we cause the Holy One, blessed be He, to put on tefillin, as mentioned above.

From *Hashem’s* reply — fulfill the *mitzvah* of tefillin etc., — we infer that there is a direct connection between learning Torah and laying tefillin, in that both have a similar effect on the creation. As previously mentioned, when a Jew lays tefillin, he causes *Hashem* to lay tefillin. Just as when a Jew lays tefillin he draws upon himself a Divine light, so too, when *Hashem* lays tefillin, He draws down into the world a special Divine light — which the *maamar* defines as the drawing of the essence of

78. *Sukkah* 52b.

79. See *Likkutei Torah, Shir HaShirim*, p. 32a.

intellect into the emotions — the same effect as Torah learning. Therefore *Hashem* replies — keep the *mitzvah* of tefillin — whose effect is the drawing of the essence of intellect into the emotions — and I will consider it as if you labored in Torah day and night.

The union of *Hashem's* intellectual attributes with His emotional attributes is also alluded to in the particular wording of the Sages, “Israel said before *HaKadosh Boruch Hu*.” The *Maamar* now explains why particularly this comment of the Sages uses the word *HaKadosh Boruch Hu* for *Hashem*. *Hashem* has many names — each name reflecting a different attribute. The use here of the name *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* is deliberate.

***HaKadosh Boruch Hu* — refers to the male and female aspects of the realm of *Atzilus*. The male aspects: *Ze'er Anpin*, G-d's emotional attributes, are alluded to by the word *Kadosh*; and the feminine aspects, *Malchus*, the power of royalty, by the word *Boruch*.⁸⁰ These allusions are reflected in our Sages' comment:⁸¹ They asked how Moshe kept track of time when he was on Mt. Sinai and answered: “When [the angels] said *Kadosh*, he knew it was day; when they said *Boruch*, he knew it was night.” [Day and night refer to *Ze'er Anpin* and *Malchus* respectively.]**

As explained above, the six days of creation correspond to the *middos* of *Hashem*. There are, in fact, seven *middos*, *Chessed*, *Gevurah*, *Tiferes*, *Netzach*, *Hod*, *Yesod* and *Malchus*. *Malchus* is different than the rest of the *middos* in the sense that *Malchus* has no essential character of its own — rather it receives from all the other *middos* and channels their effect to the lower realms. In Kabbalistic terms, the six *middos* are called *Ze'er Anpin*, or in short “*Za*”. *Malchus* is called *Nukva*. The union of *Za* and *Nekaiva* ‘procreates’ — rather like a father and a mother who create a child.

80. See *Likkutei Torah*, *Shir HaShirim*, the second *Maamar Shishim Heimah*.

81. *Yalkut Shimoni*, *Remez* 406; *Midrash Tehillim* 19:3. See also *Tzemach Tzedek*, *Yahel Or*, *ibid.*, sec. 5.

Now, the word *Kadosh* means ‘holy’ — ‘holy’ means separate or higher. In contrast, *Boruch* means blessed, which may be translated as “drawn down” or revealed.⁸²

The *middos* of *Atzilus* — the six *middos* are called *Kadosh*, for they are somewhat separated from the worlds. *Malchus* receives from the six *middos* and transmits further to the lower worlds and is therefore called *Boruch*.⁸³ The entire term *HaKadosh Boruch Hu* therefore denotes the precipitation of the six *middos* into *Malchus* and their combined effect on the lower worlds. The wording of the Sages is therefore exact.

G-d’s putting on tefillin [represents a higher level. By putting on tefillin] He draws the essence of intellect into the realm of emotion.

The connection between tefillin and intellect is illustrated by the fact that a child below the age of thirteen is not obligated to put on tefillin.⁸⁴ He is not called a man, and possesses only a small degree of intellect. At the age of thirteen he becomes a man.⁸⁵ Then, through his act of putting on tefillin, he causes G-d to put on tefillin.

Since the effect of laying tefillin is to cause *Hashem* to lay tefillin, it follows that only one who can cause that effect is obligated to lay tefillin. This explains why a child is not obligated to lay tefillin. What exactly happens when a boy turns thirteen? At this age, there is a natural change in both the

82. The word *Boruch* means blessed. *Boruch Atah* — Blessed are You. The words *Boruch Atah A-donai* are usually translated as Blessed are You *Hashem*. There are many explanations given as to the meaning of these words. Superficially why does *Hashem* need our blessing? If the intent is to offer thanks then the term *Hodaah* should be employed. The *Chinuch* explains the meaning to be a realization that *Hashem* is the source of all blessing. *Chassidus* explains that the word *Boruch* etymologically has its root in the word *Havrachah* meaning grafting — agriculturally used for the process of grafting one root into another. In this context, *Boruch* means a continuation or flow of one entity into another. *Boruch Atah A-donai* may therefore be translated as — may your presence *Hashem* be drawn and continued into the world — each *berachah* therefore being a revelation of the presence of *Hashem*.

83. Why is *Za* called day and *Malchus* night? As in every case of *mashpia* and *mekabel*, the *mashpia* is called day — for he illuminates, and the *mekabel* is called night, for he has nothing of his own.

84. See *Shulchan Aruch HaRav*, 37:3.

85. *Rashi*, *Pirkei Avos* 5:21; *Rambam*, *Hilchos Ishus* 2:10. See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. XV, p. 289.

child's intellectual and emotional qualities. Intellectually — a child has *mochin d'katnus*, a small aspect of intellect — much of his intellect is used only to direct his *middos* but he does not yet have *mochin d'gadlus* (essential intellect). Emotionally — his emotions are no longer merely natural and impulsive but he has now reached an age where the intellect can control the emotion and, with *avoda*, can attain a level where his intellect directs his emotions.

We have explained above that laying tefillin has the effect of drawing the essential intellect into the emotions. This is only possible after *Bar Mitzvah*, for a child before that time does not have essential intellect and can therefore not draw upon it. This is why a child is exempt from tefillin.

Thus we see that the spiritual aspect of tefillin is the drawing down of the essence of intellect. Thus, tefillin and the study of Torah represent the same level. Therefore, through the fulfillment of the *mitzvah* of tefillin, *Hashem* will consider it as if we had labored in Torah study day and night. The word, “as if” is used, for the two [Torah and tefillin] are not entirely similar. Through Torah study G-d's intellectual attributes are actually drawn down within the world. Through tefillin, by contrast, intellect is drawn down only within the source for the creation of the world. Nevertheless, G-d considers the fulfillment of the *mitzvah* of tefillin equal to the study of Torah day and night. [Day and night] refer to this lowly world.

This implies that, although the two are not entirely analogous, *Hashem* causes our fulfillment of the *mitzvah* of tefillin to affect this world in the same manner as does that of Torah study.

Although laying tefillin and learning Torah have a similar effect, there does, nevertheless, exist a difference between them. This explains why, in the first instance, Israel wishes to labor in the study of Torah day and night, and why it is only as a second position that *Hashem* considers laying tefillin “as if” we studied.

What exactly is the difference between them?

a) The *mochin* drawn by Torah into the world effects a change in the world's spiritual atmosphere. Although of tefillin it says, “And all the people of the earth shall see the name of

Hashem upon you, and they shall fear you,” this fear remains peripheral and does not represent an essential change.

b) Torah has a direct effect on the world, whereas tefillin only has an effect on the “small world of man” and, through him, an effect on the world.

Laying tefillin has, therefore, a similar effect on the world to Torah, but on a much reduced scale. In the first instance, we should learn Torah day and night. As a second position, at the very least, the subjugation of mind and heart through the tefillin at the beginning of the day (this condition lasting through the day) will suffice. The *Midrash* assures us that if we do keep the *mitzvah* of tefillin, *Hashem* will consider it as though we studied day and night.⁸⁶



86. See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. I, p. 40.

Chapter 6

SICHOS KODESH

***KABBALAS OL* — THE FOUNDATION OF AVODAH** (adapted from Likkutei Sichos Vol. XV, pp. 289ff.)

1. On the verse in *Parshas Vayishlach*,¹ “Shimon and Levi, Dinah’s brothers, each took his sword...”, the *Midrash*² notes that at the time Shimon and Levi killed the people of Shchem they were only thirteen years old, this being the Biblical source for a thirteen year old being obligated to perform *mitzvos*.³ This is derived from the fact that the verse refers to them as “*Ish*”⁴ which is a term used only in reference to a grown and intellectually mature person⁵ who is therefore obligated to keep the commandments.

Although there does exist a possibility that a child before the age of thirteen may be intellectually developed, nonetheless,

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1. 34:25.
 2. *Bereishis Rabbah* 80:10. *Midrash Lekach Tov* and *Midrash Seichel Tov*.
 3. *Rashi*, *Nazir* 29b section beginning “and R. Yosi.” See also *Rashi* and *Bartenura* on *Pirkei Avos* Ch. 5:21 (and according to the text of the Alter Rebbe in his *Siddur Mishnah* 22), *Machzor Vitri*, *ibid*. Well known is the question (quoted in the Responsa of the *Maharil* No. 51) that how do we know that less than the age of 13 is also not called an “*Ish*”?
 4. In the wording of *Rambam*, *Laws of Ishus* 2:10, “he is called a *Gadol* and called *Ish*.”
 5. *Rashi* and *Bartenura* in their commentary on the *Mishnah* in *Avos ibid.*, quote the verse in *Bamidbar* 5:6, “A man or woman who commits any of man’s sins...” which implies that only a man (*ish*) or woman (*ishah*) are liable for punishment. Since the same term *Ish* is used in this verse we can deduce that a 13 year old is considered responsible enough to be liable for punishment. From this cross reference it is clear that the age 13 is learned from a Biblical source. However not necessarily is this deduction without reason as shall be seen later.

There are other verses that also indicate that the term *Ish* is used in reference to maturity, e. g. *Shmos* 2:14, “Who appointed you as a dignitary (*ish*) a ruler and a judge over us,” — see *Rashi* and *Rabbeinu Bachaye ibid.*, unlike *Shmos Rabbah ibid*. See also *I Melachim* 2:2, and *Radak*, *Sefer HaShroshim* entry *Ish*.

since he is lacking in maturity, he still lacks the feel both for the precious nature of fulfilling the *mitzvos* and also the great loss incurred by not keeping them.⁶ He therefore cannot be held fully responsible for his deeds and conduct, and is not developed enough that we should place upon him the full obligation to keep the *mitzvos*.

2. On many occasions⁷ the Rebbe of Chabad delivered a *Chassidic* discourse on the occasion of a Bar Mitzvah opening⁸ with the verse,⁹ “Let us make man (*Adam*).” It is explained in many places that there are four names that Scripture uses to describe man — *Adam*, *Ish*, *Gever*, *Enosh* — and the greatest title is *Adam*.¹⁰ From this we may understand that a Bar Mitzvah has

6. In *Kuntres HaTefillah* of the Rebbe Rashab — printed by Kehot 5752 “Tract on Prayer” — Ch. 5, the Rebbe explains at length the concept of *Daas* being the third intellectual soul power (*Chochmah*, *Binah* and *Daas*). *Daas* is in fact the faculty that enables a person to bind himself to an idea or concept, and is the medium through which emotions are born. *Daas* is a distinct intellect and ensures that a concept is more clearly felt and discerned. To quote:

“For a person may understand something very well, yet he may not feel it, just as an intelligent child whose understanding is broad nonetheless does not sense the core of the matter. And for this reason, a child under the age of thirteen years is not punishable by Jewish law. He may be astute, bright and perceptive, and fully knowledgeable of all the regulations concerning the positive and negative commandments. Nevertheless, he is not culpable if he transgresses a commandment. For possessing no *daas*, a child can neither recognize nor feel the essential aspect of *mitzvos*..... Similarly in worldly concerns: a child may show a keen understanding of monetary matters and prestige; nevertheless their true significance is foreign to him, since unlike an adult, he cannot discern and sense them. The same applies to the opposite qualities, namely lowliness and poverty. Unlike an adult who can sense these shortcomings very clearly, a child, though he understands their demerits, cannot feel them.”

See also *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5670, p. 115; *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5672, Vol. III, p. 1227.

7. For example the *Maamar* “Let us make man” of year 5640. However, we do find that by the *Rebbeim* a *Maamar* on the verse, “Be strong and be a man (*Ish*)” was said on a day when tefillin were put on for the first time — 11 Iyar 5653, (see *Likkutei Dibburim*, Vol. I, p. 107b), also 2nd Day of Chanukah 5696.

8. The Previous Rebbe related that when a *maamar* was said by a Bar Mitzvah of the *Rebbeim*, the *maamar* always started with the opening “Let us make man” even though when later the *maamar* was written and copied, the opening words were deleted.

9. *Bereishis* 1:26.

10. To quote from *HaYom Yom*, entry for 4 Elul: “In describing the unique qualities of humankind, four terms are used: *Adam* refers to the quality of mind and intellect; *Ish* to the quality of heart and emotion;

Enosh, weakness in either intellect or emotion or both; finally *Gever*, who overcomes inner weakness and removes obstacles and hindrances to the

a connection not only with the level of “*Ish*” but also with the level of *Adam*. However this poses a difficulty. If it is sufficient for obligation of *mitzvos* to reach the level of “*Ish*,” then why did the *Rebbeim* connect Bar Mitzvah with the level of *Adam*?¹¹

Furthermore; the difference between “*Ish*” and “*Adam*” lies in the fact that the term “*Ish*” is used to describe *seichel*-intellect which has a connection with *middos*-emotions, and the feelings of the heart.¹² There are many different levels of “*Ish*”, and in fact one only attains a full level of “*Ish*” at the age of twenty. However the term “*Adam*” is used to describe the faculty of *seichel* as it stands higher than the *middos*. This magnifies the question even more. What is the connection between the level of “let us make man (*Adam*)” and a Bar Mitzvah — how can one confer the title of “*Adam*” upon someone who is only thirteen years old?

We must therefore answer that, although by the age of Bar Mitzvah the boy attains the level of “*Ish*,” nonetheless, in order to fulfill the *mitzvos* properly one must also be under the influence of the level of “*Adam*,” as shall be explained.

3. The source from which we may learn that the level of “*Ish*” does not suffice for *mitzvah* performance is the very same verse quoted above: “Shimon and Levi, Dinah’s brothers, each took his sword.” Superficially this verse poses a problem: it is the extra dimension of *seichel*-intellect and *daas* (intellect that affects the emotions) that is added when a boy reaches the age of thirteen that allows him to take the responsibility for *mitzvah* performance. How, therefore, can we derive this from a verse whose content — each one taking his sword and killing all the

attainment of an intellectual or emotional quality. That is, *Gever* works upon *Enosh* to elevate him to the plane of *Ish* or *Adam*. Since it is possible to turn *Enosh* into *Ish* or *Adam*, it is obvious that *Enosh* already possesses the qualities found in *Ish* and *Adam*.”

For further references see: *Zohar*, Vol. III, p. 48a; *Likkutei Torah, Shir HaShirim* 25a; *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5629, *Maamar Ish Key Yimmarate*; *Kuntres Toras HaChassidus* Ch. 7; *Sefer Arachim Chabad*, Entry *Adam* para. 8-9.

11. See also *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5711, p. 246 and *Chanoch LeNaar* p. 10 regarding the Rebbe Rashab: “then he became an *Ish*. When he became Bar Mitzvah the Rebbe Maharash blessed him to become an *Adam*.”

12. *Pirush HaMilos* (by the Mitteler Rebbe) Ch. 2. See at length *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. IV, p. 1117 and footnotes *ibid*.

males — is an action which was motivated by strong emotions?¹³

We must therefore say that from this verse we may learn that not only does a Bar Mitzvah have to be an “*Ish*” but that the verse also hints at a level of “*Adam*,” and it is for this reason that the *Rebbeim* started the *maamarim* with the words “let us make man (*Adam*),” to tell us that the level of “*Ish*” is not enough — there must also be *Adam*.

The explanation:

Regarding the source from which we learn that a boy is obligated to keep the *mitzvos* at the age of thirteen, there are in fact two opinions: the first, as derived from the above-mentioned verse, and the second, that the age of thirteen is not derived from any Scriptural source, rather, this is the age that has been received as tradition from Moshe on Sinai as the *halachic* age of obligation for *mitzvos*.¹⁴

The difference between the two: According to the first opinion, the age of thirteen is an age at which there is a natural intellectual maturity, and the verse, by describing Shimon and Levi as an “*Ish*,” indicates that at the age of thirteen they had reached that level of maturity. Whereas, according to the second opinion, that the age of thirteen has been received as Mosaic tradition, the age has nothing to do with a natural change, rather it is a *halachah*.¹⁵

The practical *halachic* difference would arise in the case of a non-Jew, concerning the age at which he is obligated to keep the commandments which are incumbent on non-Jews. According to the first opinion, that the obligation of *mitzvos* is dependent on human nature, it would follow that non-Jews would also be obligated to keep their commandments at the age of thirteen. However according to the second opinion — that the age of obligation for Jews has been received as Mosaic

13. See *Vayishlach* 34:7 “And they were very angry.” *Rashi* on *Vayechi* 49:6 “in their anger.”

14. This is the opinion of the *Rosh* in Responsa Principle 16. See also Responsa of *Maharil* No. 51 and the explanation of *Rashi* on the *Mishnah* in *Avos*, *ibid*.

15. One may perhaps explain this opinion by saying that this opinion holds that signs of puberty (and years) make one into a *gadol* — not that it is proof of a *gadol* — see *Tzofnas Panei’ach* on *Rambam*, *Laws of Ishus* 2:9.

tradition — it would seem that since non-Jews do not have such a tradition,¹⁶ their age of obligation would be subjective, dependent on each one's understanding and maturity — possibly even at an earlier age than thirteen.¹⁷

In *avodah*, these two opinions represent two different approaches to the question of how a Jew should commence his performance of *mitzvos*. According to the first opinion, which holds that the obligation to keep the *mitzvos* is dependent on intellectual maturity,¹⁸ it follows that the approach to the performance of *mitzvos* must be within the realm of the intellect. However according to the second opinion, the reason a thirteen-year old must keep the *mitzvos* is because that is the Mosaic tradition — it is a *halachah* — and that is the will of the A-lmighty — which is an approach of *kabbalas ol* — accepting upon oneself the yoke of heaven.¹⁹

4. From the very fact, however, that the first opinion derives the age of thirteen from the account of Shimon and Levi drawing their swords — which in itself is an act of *mesirus nefesh*, it is clear²⁰ that even according to the first opinion, in addition to the intellectual dimension, there must also be an element of *mesirus nefesh* transcending the intellect. This is in no contradiction to the aforementioned, namely, that the age of thirteen represents a level of intellectual maturity, it is only adding the detail that the foundation of all *avodah* must be *kabbalas ol* and only when the foundation is one of *kabbalas ol* will the *avodah* with intellect be as it should be.²¹

The proof for this lies in the verse²² in *Parshas Nitzavim* where the people are warned to keep the *mitzvos*: “See — I have

16. *Rambam*, Laws of *Melachim*, 9:10.

17. Responsa of *Chasam Sofer Yoreh Deah* 317 in explanation of the opinion of *Rambam ibid.*, and 10:2. Note comment of *Tosafos Sanhedrin* 69a, that in earlier generations the signs of puberty were seen much earlier.

18. And although there may be exceptions that even at the age of thirteen the boy has not reached a level of maturity, even so the Torah speaks of the majority. See *Moreh Nevuchim*, Vol. III, Ch. 34.

19. Like the saying of the Sages *Yevamos* 76b, that if it is Mosaic tradition we will accept it even though intellectually it may be challenged.

20. See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. V, p. 162 footnote 74; *ibid.*, p. 421.

21. See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. II, p. 428. Vol. IV, p. 1211.

22. *Nitzavim* 30:15-19.

placed before you today life and good, death evil.... and you shall choose life.” The wording of the verse poses a problem: if a person can see for himself that the way of Torah and *mitzvos* is “life and good” then why is it necessary for him to be told to choose life? The answer: if a person’s choice to keep Torah and *mitzvos* is based on his intellect and his understanding that they are “life and good,” he has not yet achieved becoming an *oved* (servant of G-d). The concept of a true *oved* is that of one who acts only because the master has commanded him to do so,²³ and therefore true *avodas Hashem* is serving G-d only because G-d has commanded us to “choose life.”

However, since the verse begins with the words, “See — I have placed before you...” and also finishes with the words: “choose life” it is clear that it is the will of G-d that Torah and *mitzvos* should permeate the entire being, and it is therefore necessary that the intellect, also, must appreciate that Torah and *mitzvos* is “life and good.” To summarize: there must be both dimensions. The foundation must be *kabbalas ol*, and inherent in that *kabbalas ol* is the fact that it is the will of G-d that the Torah should also be understood intellectually.

5. We will now understand the connection of the verse “Let us make man” with Bar Mitzvah. In the explanation of the title “Adam” there are two dimensions: 1) “Adam” represents full intellectual maturity, as explained above; 2) “Adam” (אדם) has the same letters as “*m’od*,” (מאד)²⁴ the dimension of the infinite that transcends the intellect.²⁵ Since both concepts are represented in the same word, one must say that they are related to each other.

The idea in *avodah* is that even when a person reaches the highest levels of intellect as indicated by the title “Adam” — which is higher than the *seichel* of “Ish”, nonetheless, he must also attain the level of *mesirus nefesh*, which transcends

23. See *Tanya*, Ch. 41.

24. *Bereishis Rabbah* 88:5; see *Rashi, ibid. Torah Or*, p. 46d; *Likkutei Torah, Shir HaShirim*, p. 29b; *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5637, Ch. 22.

25. *Likkutei Torah, ibid.* This entity expresses itself in the power of speech which stems from the power of the infinite invested in the soul which transcends intellect — *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5637, *ibid.*

intellect.²⁶ And so is it in the obverse case. Even when he is illuminated with the powers of *mesirus nefesh* which transcend intellect, he should not rest content with that level, rather he should also strive to make this *mesirus nefesh* permeate his inner powers and, primarily, his intellect.

And this is one of the reasons why the *Rebbeim* said a *maamar* beginning with the words “Let us make man (*Adam*)” on the occasion of a Bar Mitzvah, to show that even when one has reached a level of intellectual maturity — “*Ish*”—it is not enough, one has still to strive for the level of *mesirus nefesh* indicated in the words “*Ish charbo*” each one his sword, an *avodah* of *mesirus nefesh* that transcends intellect, which is connected with the level of “*Adam*”—the same letters as “*m’od*.”²⁷

BAR MITZVAH — AN AGE OF *MESIRUS NEFESH*
(Condensed from *Likkutei Sichos* Vol. V, p. 150ff.)

It is from the verse in *Parshas Vayishlach*²⁸: “And it came to pass on the third day, when they (the people of Shchem) were in pain, that two of Yaakov’s sons, Shimon and Levi, Dinah’s brothers each took his sword (*ish charbo*) and they came upon the city confidently, and killed every male,” that we learn that a boy from the age of thirteen is obligated to keep the *mitzvos*. Shimon and Levi were at that time thirteen years old,²⁹ and the verse refers to them as an *Ish* so we may learn that a Bar Mitzvah boy is called an *Ish* and is obligated in *mitzvos*.³⁰

Everything in Torah is exact and precise. It is therefore puzzling as to why such an important moment in life — the

26. See *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5672, Vol. I, Ch. 100.

27. See *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5670, p. 122 where it is explained that the level of *daas* stems from *ratzon* and *pnimiyus haratzon*. This fits in very well with that which has been explained that the level of *mesirus nefesh* “*m’od*” being the same letters as *Adam*, transcending intellect applied to a thirteen year old who has reached a level of *deah*.

28. *Bereishis* 34:25.

29. *Bereishis Rabbah* 80:10. Perhaps this is the source of the comment of *Rashi, Nazir* 29b that they were at that time aged 13. See *Midrash Lekach Tov* and *Shochar Tov* who calculate (albeit differently) this age. See Chapter of *Reshimos*.

30. *Rashi, Nazir ibid*. Commentaries on *Mishnah Avos* Ch. 5 (end); *Machzor Vitri, ibid*.

time of Bar Mitzvah which, as the *Midrash*³¹ explains, is the moment when the *Yetzer Tov* (good inclination) enters the Jew and, as the Alter Rebbe explains,³² is the moment that signals the final and main entry of the holy soul into the Jew, the moment when he becomes fully obligated to keep the *mitzvos*³³ — how can it be that such an important passage of life is derived from the source of Shimon and Levi taking their swords, etc., which on the face of it was an inappropriate act?

True, in killing the people of Shchem they were not transgressing, since the people of Shchem were liable for capital punishment³⁴ (either because they did not bring Shchem to justice for his act,³⁵ or for sins committed prior to the act of Shchem³⁶). However, it is clear that their actions were not approved of by their father, Yaakov. Later in *Parshas Vayechi*,³⁷ at the time of Yaakov's blessings, he refers to this act: "Shimon and Levi are comrades, their weaponry is a stolen craft," meaning to say, an act of murder of this kind has been stolen from Yaakov's brother Esav. This is alluded to in the verse itself, where it is stressed that "two of Yaakov's sons..." that is, although we already know that they were Yaakov's sons, Scripture finds it important to stress here that they were Yaakov's sons, since to all appearances they were not acting like sons of Yaakov, for they acted independently, without seeking their fathers advice.³⁸

31. *Koheles Rabbah* 4:13.

32. *Shulchan Aruch Mahadura Tinyana*, Ch. 4 (end).

33. For *mitzvos* which the boy keeps before Bar Mitzvah are only obligated rabbinically, albeit the father is obligated to educate the boy, however the boy himself is exempt — see Laws of *Talmud Torah* of Alter Rebbe. *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim*, 343. For a full discussion of the opinions in this matter, see *Sdei Chemed Klalim* 1:60 (Vol. 1:185:4 in Kehot edition).

34. See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. V, p. 190 note 41.

35. *Rambam, Hilchos Melachim*, Ch. 9. See *Radak* verse 27, "For many people saw Shchem when he took her and nobody protested." What requires explanation is where do we find a liability for capital punishment by a human court for an act of not protesting? See *Or HaChaim* who explains that the people of Shchem helped Shchem kidnap Dinah — see there at length. However if this is the case why was Yaakov so upset with his sons? See the *Sichah* at length.

36. *Ramban* 34:13. Ran in commentary on *Sanhedrin* 56b.

37. *Vayechi* 49:5; *Bereishis Rabbah* 98:5, 99:7.

38. *Rashi* on verse, taken from *Bereishis Rabbah* 80:10.

This amplifies the above question. If this verse itself alludes to the fact that Yaakov was not happy with their conduct, then why particularly from this verse do we derive the source for Bar Mitzvah?

This may be understood by a comment of the *Midrash*³⁹ on the verse,⁴⁰ “For in their rage they murdered people (*Ish*)” — the singular form, *Ish*, is used. Comments the *Midrash*: “Did they only kill one man, does it not say that they killed all the males? Only they were all considered before G-d⁴¹ as one man.”

One may ask: the wording: “they murdered people (*Ish*)” would be appropriate only if the act of Shimon and Levi was in fulfillment of the Will of G-d, for then one could say that since before G-d they were considered as one man, so too, in the eyes of Shimon and Levi who were fulfilling the Will of G-d, were they considered one man — and the brothers received this power from G-d.⁴² However we find that Yaakov criticized them for this act, even going so far as to say that this in fact was a trait of his brother Esav. If they were *not* fulfilling the will of G-d, then, why does the verse use, in reference to their act of murder, the singular form *Ish*, to indicate that before G-d they were only considered as one man?

One must therefore say that although Yaakov agreed in principle that the people of Shchem were liable for capital punishment, he was dissatisfied with the way in which Shimon and Levi carried out their punishment — in such a way that,

39. *Bereishis Rabbah* 99:7; *Tanchuma*, *Vayechi* 10.

40. *Vayechi* 49:6.

41. The *Tanchuma* adds “before G-d and before them.” One could suggest that the *Tanchuma* means that since before G-d they were only considered as one man, therefore they too only considered them as one man. *Rashi* in his commentary on the verse quotes only that they were considered by Shimon and Levi as one man and omits the comment of the *Midrash* that before G-d they were considered as one man. This seems to suggest that it was only in the eyes of the brothers and because of their might did they consider them as one man. See however *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. V, p. 257 note 37.

42. Similar to the verse in *Shoftim* 6:16, “for I will be with you (and therefore) you shall strike Midian as one man.” See also *Shoftim* 20:1 and *Rashi*, *ibid.*, “and you shall see a horse and its rider — in the eyes of them all like one horse,” which can mean — that since your going out to war is the will of G-d, which in My (G-d’s) eyes is like one horse, therefore also you should see it that way.

“You have troubled me, to make me odious among the inhabitants of the land.”⁴³

This we can understand in two ways:

a) Since the only way to punish the people of Shchem was to trick them — first by promising them that if they would consent to be circumcised then, “we will dwell with you and become a single people,”⁴⁴ — and thereafter abrogating that promise and killing them — Yaakov was of the opinion that it would be better not to kill them in order to avoid the *Chillul Hashem* (desecration of G-d’s name) that would result from such trickery.⁴⁵

b) On the contrary: Yaakov was of the opinion that they should be killed — not through trickery which could result in *Chillul Hashem* — but openly — since in the eyes of *Hashem* they were only considered to be one man,⁴⁶ they (his sons) could act with impunity.⁴⁷

However, Yaakov was also well aware that Shimon and Levi, due to their intrinsic characters would not reckon with the claim, “you have made me odious etc.,” for the cry of “should our sister be made a harlot?!” aroused in them a terrific sense of

43. *Vayishlach* 34:30. What upset Yaakov was the prospect of a *Chillul Hashem* — desecration of G-d’s name (see also *Ramban, Vayechi* 49:5). One cannot however suggest that what upset Yaakov was that such an action placed himself and his family in danger, as it says, “and I and my house shall be destroyed,” for if the act in itself was correct, Yaakov would not have described it as “in their anger did they murder people”, and he definitely would not have accused them of using weapons of violence, the blessing of Esau.

44. *Vayishlach* 34:16.

45. One could draw a parallel with the *Givonim* — see *Gittin* 46a, *Yevamos* 79a — whose punishment was withheld because of the *Chillul Hashem* that would result through abrogation of the promise made to them.

46. This explains why in Yaakov’s blessing he uses the expression, “for in their anger they killed *ish*” — why in this rebuke does Yaakov stress they were only considered as one man? The answer: since in the eyes of *Hashem* they were only considered as one man the brothers should have killed them openly and not through trickery.

47. It may be suggested that the reason why they used trickery was a) their humility led them to believe that they were unworthy of a miracle [even though they trusted in the power of their father — *Bereishis Rabbah* 80:10, *Rashi* 34:25, that was only after the people of Shchem were suffering in pain after their circumcision — their trust therefore was enclosed in nature]; or b) they were angry and therefore made a mistake — see *Pesachim* 66b, *Sifri* and *Rashi, Matos* 31:21 — this also explains why Yaakov cursed “their anger.”

jealousy of holiness, similar to that of Pinchas, who was in fact a descendent of Levi.⁴⁸

Jealousy of this kind is deeply rooted in the soul, as it states: “their zeal for vengeance is hard as the grave”⁴⁹ and it touches the very essence of the soul.⁵⁰ When such terrific jealousy is aroused, there is no room for intellectual calculation.⁵¹

Since Shimon and Levi were jealous for G-d — their actions transcending all calculation — G-d’s power was also revealed in the sense that in His eyes they were only considered as one “*Ish* (man).”

The above explanation remains problematic:

If Shimon and Levi did act out of holy jealousy — above all calculations — then why were they criticized for not taking Yaakov’s advice before they acted? Advice is rational — their actions were by their nature irrational?

The explanation:

It is for this reason that the verse describes them as “the two sons of Yaakov;” although they were his children, they did not act like his children. This may be understood to mean: True, it could not be demanded of them that they consult with Yaakov, since they were motivated by great jealousy which stands above all advice. However, what *could* have been demanded is that they consult Yaakov purely from the perspective of the *mitzvah* of *Kibbud Av* — honoring their father.

But this still remains problematic.

If the criticism that “they did not take advice” was attributable to a lack of *Kibbud Av*, their resultant action should not have been approved by *Hashem*. In this case the original question returns — why does the verse use the singular form *Ish*, implying that all the inhabitants were in *Hashem*’s eyes as

48. Yaakov’s claim “you have made me odious in the eyes of the inhabitants of the land,” came before he heard their reply “should our sister be made a harlot.” See later to understand the reason why Yaakov rebuked them.

49. *Shir HaShirim* 8:6.

50. See *Vayeitzei* 30:1 and *Or HaTorah*, *ibid*.

51. This answers the question of the *Or HaChaim* 34:31. See also the parallel of Pinchas — his self-sacrifice transcending intellect — see *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. VIII, p. 158 note 65.

one man, and that, therefore, *Hashem* approved of their course of action?

Clear analysis of the *mitzvah* of *Kibbud Av* shows that there is a major difference between the *Kibbud Av* practiced by a Noachide and the *Kibbud Av* demanded of a Jew. The *mitzvah* of *Kibbud Av* to which a Jew is held is a *mitzvah* from *Hashem* and is kept as such — one connects with *Hashem* through honoring one's parents. However, the *mitzvah* of *Kibbud Av* of a Noachide has different parameters. In the Noachide code, honor due to parents is a commandment given in order to create a stable society.⁵²

Living before the giving of the Torah, Shimon and Levi were obligated in the *mitzvah* of *Kibbud Av* in the same way as a Noachide. The obligation to consult their father was certainly not applicable in this situation, given that the actions of Shchem were an abomination and the opposite of “settling the world.” In order for Shimon and Levi to achieve a stable law abiding society, it was necessary for them to correct a criminal act.

This being the case, we need to search for an alternative explanation as to why Yaakov was so upset at their not having sought his advice.

As explained above, the cry, “should our sister be made a harlot?!” affected Shimon and Levi so deeply that they were driven to act in a manner uncharacteristic of the sons of Yaakov. They were so enveloped in their feelings, they saw no other option but to annihilate Shchem.

It is for this reason that when they were challenged by Yaakov, they answered, “Should our sister etc.,” and Yaakov accepted their answer. Later, however, he rebuked them — for after he saw that, “at their whim they hamstrung an ox” — this proved that they had a natural tendency to such actions, and it suggested that even in the killing of Shchem, although predominantly motivated by the cry, “should our sister etc.,” there was a tinge of this natural tendency.

This explains why, in his rebuke, Yaakov says, “Shimon and Levi are brothers” — brothers to Dinah but not brothers to

52. See the *Sichah* at length for the difference between the *mitzvos* of a Jew and a Noachide, as reflected in the *mitzvah* of *Kibbud Av*.

Yosef⁵³ — in other words, the fact that they acted as brothers to Dinah, but not to Yosef, confirms the suspicion that in their killing of Shchem there was mixed into their intentions a twist of their own character — their weaponry a stolen craft.

THE AGE OF BAR MITZVAH

We now see why the age of Bar Mitzvah is derived from the account of the actions of Shimon and Levi. The story teaches us how to act when faced with a situation of harlotry. In truth, every sin is an act of harlotry as alluded to in the verse, “and you shall not turn after your heart and after your eyes after which you stray,” — for when one is torn away from *Hashem* through sin, this may be compared to a harlot who is prohibited to her husband.⁵⁴

One must know that in such a situation one should not reckon with any calculations or limitations — even limitations of Torah — one must at that moment arouse in himself a feeling of *mesirus nefesh*.

After one has aroused a feeling of *mesirus nefesh*, thereafter all one’s actions must be calculated, rational and according to the Torah. It is only in order that rational *avodah* may be all that it must be that *mesirus nefesh* is a prerequisite— immediately on becoming an *Ish* he acquires *mesirus nefesh*, which is above all rationale.



53. *Bereishis Rabbah* 98:5, 99:7.

54. See *Likkutei Torah, Korach*, p. 53c.

Chapter 7

RESHIMOS OF BAR MITZVAH

RESHIMOS NO. 5. MONDAY 26 SIVAN, 5691

Details of the Previous Rebbe's Bar Mitzvah / The Gartel / Four Pairs of Tefillin / Details of the Rebbe Rashab's younger years / The davening of the Rebbe Rashab

(The contents of the *Reshimah* make it clear that these are notes that the Rebbe took of the words of the Previous Rebbe.)

I have a handwritten script from my father (the Rebbe Rashab) of the *Maamar* "It says in *Midrash Tehillim*"² which I said on my Bar Mitzvah, and which my father gave me as a present. It is the very same *Maamar* that my father said on the day of his Bar Mitzvah.³ I also have a handwritten script of the *Maamar* that my grandfather, the Rebbe Maharash, gave my father as a present for his Bar Mitzvah.⁴

The Rebbe Maharash also wrote a *Maamar* intended for Reb Zalman Aharon (the Raza — brother of the Rebbe Rashab) to say on his Bar Mitzvah. However, he later took it back, and it is bound together with the handwritten booklet of *Maamarim* for that year. The *Maamar* which was given to the Rashab, however, remained with the Rashab.

From both the *Maamarim* it is evident that these *Maamarim* were written for Bar Mitzvah boys to say on the occasion of their Bar Mitzvah. Nevertheless, now some sixty years later, with hindsight of the life history of the Rebbe Rashab and the Raza one sees how clearly the life of each one is reflected in the *Maamarim*.

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1. The Previous Rebbe.
 2. Printed in *Sefer HaMaamarim*, 5634, p. 53; 5653, p. 279; 5708, p. 271.
 3. See *Kuntres Chanoch LeNaar*, p. 9.
 4. See *Sefer HaSichos* 5687, p. 174.

In addition to the *Maamar* that was said by the Bar Mitzvah boys, the Rebbe Maharash also said *Chassidus* at each Bar Mitzvah.⁵ The *Maamar* for the Bar Mitzvah of the Rebbe Rashab began with the words, “He used to say: At five years of age...”⁶

The Rebbe Rashab and the Raza wore silk *kapotes* (frock coats) and hats for their Bar Mitzvah. The sons of the Tzemach Tzedek wore round hats. The Tzemach Tzedek himself wore a *shtreimel* — the Maharash too, (apparently once he accepted the leadership and became Rebbe — the writer⁷)

I wore a *gartel* in the year 5651⁸ but in such a way that it could not be seen. In the month of Iyar 5653, when I started to wear tefillin publicly, I began to wear the *gartel* in a way that it could be seen.

I started to wear tefillin in the month of Tammuz 5652,⁹ initially, for the first few days, for the purpose of *chinuch* and then, on the 12th of Tammuz 5652, with a blessing. I put them on in my father’s room so that nobody should know of it.

Initially, when wearing tefillin, I only read the *Shema*, and not the *Shemonah Esreh*. However, in the month of Elul 5652, I wore the tefillin throughout the prayers. I still used to attend the *Beis HaMidrash*,¹⁰ kiss the *tzitzis*, stand for *Shemonah Esreh* etc. However, in that time I was actually saying *pesukei d’zimra*, *Tehillim* and *Mishnayos* by heart.¹¹ In the month of Iyar 5753, I started to wear the tefillin openly.¹²

5. See the list of *maamarim* printed in the *Sefer HaToldos* of the Rebbe Maharash for details of which *maamarim* were said.

6. *Avos* 5:22.

7. Although the Rebbe is noting the words of the Previous Rebbe, he adds pertinent information in brackets.

8. When he was aged 11. This was two years before his Bar Mitzvah and therefore he wore it hidden from sight.

9. See however *Sefer HaSichos* 5700, p. 152; 5711, p. 171, where it is related that the Previous Rebbe started to put tefillin on without a blessing on Friday 11 Tammuz 5651, and from Sunday 13 Tammuz with a blessing.

10. That is, since he wore the tefillin in private in his fathers room, then he could not pray with the *minyán* in *shul*, however he still used to attend *shul* and when they were praying he made out as he was praying together with them but actually he was saying *Tehillim* etc.

11. See *Sefer HaSichos*, *ibid*.

12. On Sunday of *Parshas Acharei Mos*, 11 Iyar 5653 — *Likkutei Dibburim*, Vol. I, p. 107b. See also *Igros Kodesh* of the Rayatz, Vol. XX, p. 136.

My grandmother — the Rabbonis Rivkah, of blessed memory — called me and gave me a *gartel* as a present. She said to me, “I am giving you a *gartel* like the one that was given to your father. Ask your father what his father said to him when he gave it to him.”

(— For the Bar Mitzvah (or for the first time of putting on tefillin? — the writer) of the Rebbe Maharash, the Tzemach Tzedek said to the Rabbonis Moussia: “I am considering giving him a *gartel* just as my grandfather (the Alter Rebbe) gave one to me.” The Rabbonis asked the Tzemach Tzedek why he had not also given their other sons a *gartel*, and the Tzemach Tzedek answered, “By us we do not ask any questions, and nobody asks any questions on us.” The Rabbonis Rivkah related that before the Bar Mitzvah of the Rebbe Rashab she went to the Rebbe Maharash and asked him about giving a *gartel* to the Rebbe Rashab, to which the Rebbe Maharash replied, “It is very appropriate.”)

I immediately ran to ask my father but while I was running my excitement abated and I no longer had the courage to enter and ask. I went to the man who was teaching me at that time — his name was Reb Nissan and he was a good teacher indeed. He would learn two different tractates with me, one in depth, with the entire commentary of *Tosafos*, and the other, quickly, omitting some of the *Tosafos*. I told my teacher everything my grandmother told me. He advised me to tell nobody of the matter and to ask the Rebbe Rashab.

Reb Nissan further related to me, in the name of his father-in-law, Reb Pesach, a teacher who taught the sons of the Tzemach Tzedek and, later, the sons of the Maharash, to read — that on the occasion of every Bar Mitzvah he was given a gift of ten roubles (it appears that this was also the case with the sons of the Tzemach Tzedek — the writer). On the occasion of the Bar Mitzvah of the Rebbe Rashab, Reb Pesach went to the Rebbe Maharash and received the ten roubles. The Rabbonis also came in, and he was given a *gartel*, (or the Maharash only told Reb Pesach that he gave a *gartel* etc., but it wasn't done in front of him — the writer). Reb Pesach then said to the Rebbe Maharash, “Just as your father did with you, as far as I remember, when he gave you a *gartel* for the Bar Mitzvah and

said,¹³ “She girds her loins with strength”, the girdle is on the loins, at this moment we don’t need to think into this.. but with time... girdle his education, girdle his education.¹⁴

(Reb Pesach continued) — At the Bar Mitzvah of the Raza, I did not want to ask (why he was not given a *gartel*) but now... why the change? “Pesach — (I remember that when Reb Nissan told me this story, I was amazed that the Rebbe Maharash simply called him Pesach and not Reb Pesach even though he was his teacher — parenthetical comment by the Previous Rebbe) — as for us, we don’t ask any questions and about us one does not ask any questions, whoever understands, understands, and whoever does not understand, does not understand.

(From the Bar Mitzvah and on, the Rebbe Maharash was particular to call his sons and his son-in-law by their abbreviated names, such as Raza etc.¹⁵ He himself used the expressions “go to the Raza, or to Ramal¹⁶ etc. Once the Rebbe Maharash was standing by the window of his room when he heard Radatz Chein¹⁷ say that he was going to the Rebbe Rashab to review something he had learned,¹⁸ and he actually called him with his name adding “Reb” before the name. The Rebbe Maharash called him and said, “Come, I would like to see who you are that you should call him etc.! The Radatz burst out crying, etc., — parenthetical comment of the Previous Rebbe)

Reb Nissan told me how beautifully the Bar Mitzvah of the Raza was celebrated. It was the 19th of Tammuz and the Bar Mitzvah celebrations started a few days before the 17th of Tammuz. The festive meal was in the garden. etc.

13. See *Sefer Toldos Maharash*, p. 12.

14. The word used in Hebrew is *chalatzav* or *chalotzaim* meaning education — said in parenthesis by the Previous Rebbe.

15. See *Sefer Toldos Maharash*, p. 22.

16. His son-in-law Reb Moshe Aryeh Leib Ginsburg from Vitebsk — the husband of Devorah Leah.

17. Reb Dovid Zvi Chein, son of Reb Peretz Chein. The Radatz was a Rav in Tchernikov and was one of the chassidim of the Rebbe Maharash and Rashab. See about him in *Sefer HaSichos 5699*, p. 298.

18. Usually of a chassidic discourse of the Rebbe.

I considered asking my father (the Rebbe Rashab) that night. I did not eat lunch with him, except on Shabbos, for it did not fit in with my daily schedule. Neither did I eat supper with him, only we went home together from *Maariv* — for in the days of *Sefirah* he davened *Maariv* with the *Tzibbur*. The Rebbe Rashab said the blessing over the *Sefirah* and the *Sefirah* itself at great length. I had in mind that as we were on our way home I would make a sign to show I would like to ask something and when he asked me “Yosef, what do you want?” I would ask him. (— He used to call me Yosef, as if Yosef were written with the letter “*shin*” and sometimes, when he was in a jovial mood, and because of something that had happened, he would call me Reb Itzel — what does Reb Itzel say? — and the like). However, that evening a number of *baalei batim* came with a *Din Torah* which needed his adjudication, so that I did not manage to ask him. The next morning, when he saw me deliberately waiting at the door to his room, I asked him, and I told him about the giving of the *gartel*. He became very emotional, and immediately tears sprung to his eyes and he kissed me on my forehead.

Even before I was thirteen, I received two gifts from my father — two handwritten manuscripts of *chassidus*: the *maamar* “How numerous are Your works,” a *maamar* in the handwriting of my father, written with a pencil, and the *maamar* “The Rabbis have learned, the Chanukah candle...” a *maamar* in the handwriting of Reb Shmuel Sofer¹⁹ with notes by the Rebbe Rashab.²⁰

The *maamar* “How numerous are Your works” he gave me in the year 5652, saying, “This is a *chassidisher* kiss, and in time I will tell you what I mean.”

19. One of the leading transcribers of *chassidus* in Lubavitch for many years. See introduction of *maamar Vehecharim 5631*.

20. Printed in *Sefer HaMaamarim 5643*, p. 35. On this *maamar*, the Previous Rebbe noted, “The *maamar* is in the handwriting of Reb Shmuel Sofer, and the notes are those of my saintly father. This *maamar* I received as a gift on Chanukah 5653 (see however *Sefer HaSichos*, p. 29 where it states that on *Shabbos Parshas Lech Lecha 5651*, my father tested me and gave me the *maamar Ner Chanukah 5643*) and he reviewed it with me three times.

In the year 5656 he told me that in the year 5644 — at which time my father lived in two rooms, a bedroom, and another room where my father sat and learned with Reb Yaakov Mordechai Bezfolov.²¹ My bed was also in that room, and they learned at night as I was sleeping in my bed. They say that I was a beautiful and a *lichtiger* child. Reb Yaakov Mordechai saw me as I slept and they began to discuss the subject of *Bnei Temura*²² in its simple meaning, and then in more subtle terms with explanations of *Chassidus*. Reb Yaakov Mordechai said that my appearance and facial complexion showed purity of thought. At that moment my father was aroused to kiss me, but the thought occurred to him that not only were sacrifices offered in the Temple, but silver and gold were also brought to the Temple coffers. He then decided to exchange this kiss with *Chassidus*, after which he wrote the *Maamar* “How numerous are *Your* works,” which he subsequently gave to me in the year 5652.²³

In that year I also received the *Maamar* “The Rabbis have learned, the Chanukah light.” This took place after the wedding of my aunt Mushka.²⁴ He said to me, smiling, “You are a *shkotz!* How come a child of twelve can stay up an entire night for *chassidus*, when older *Yidden* were not there at all!” and he gave me the *Maamar* as a gift.

He learned “How numerous are *Your* works” with me one and a half months before my Bar Mitzvah; first, the whole *Maamar*, and then a little at a time until I knew it well enough to repeat.

Aside from this, he instructed me to learn for the Bar Mitzvah the very *Maamar* that he said (for his Bar Mitzvah — see above) and the *Maamar* “He used to say.”

My Bar Mitzvah was on a Monday, and then I had my *Aliyah*. When I accompanied my father to the *Ohel*, he

21. A Rav of Poltava. He was a *chassid* of the Rebbe Maharash and then of the Rebbe Rashab. About him, see *Sefer HaSichos 5697*, p. 179 note 42.

22. See *Nedarim 20b*, *Tur* and *Shulchan Aruch*, *Orach Chaim*, 240:3.

23. This story was also recounted by the Rebbe during the Shivah of the Previous Rebbe — See *Toras Menachem*, *Hisvaadiyos 5710*, p. 4, and *Sichah* of 10 Shvat 5722.

24. To her husband Reb Moshe HaKohen Horenstein on Friday of *Parshas Teitzei* 10th Elul 5652.

instructed me to say there the *Maamar* “He used to say” and another *Maamar* (it appears to be the *Maamar* “How numerous” — the writer).

On the following Shabbos, I repeated in his room the *Maamar*: “He used to say,” and another *maamar* (it appears to be the *maamar* for the Bar Mitzvah — the writer). I was standing at the time of repetition, and he was too, wearing the round hat. I stood facing the place where he usually sat and he stood to one side. The repetition was difficult for me, as it was a long *maamar* and in certain places I still did not understand the content.²⁵

I also learned a “Lomdus”²⁶ deep Talmudic discussion by heart, although I did not say it.

The Raza only put on *Rashi* and *Rabbeinu Tam*’s tefillin. There were certain times, when the Rebbe Maharash put on tefillin of *Rashi* and *Rabbeinu Tam* at the same time, davening the entire prayers with them. These tefillin were very small, less than two fingers, etc.²⁷ The Rebbe Rashab also wore them for some time, however it was difficult for him, since they were so small — less than two fingers, etc. He had the intention to remove his mind from the tefillin, take them off, also the *tallis*, and later put on the *Rashi* tefillin again with a *berachah*. And I asked him (these are words of the Previous Rebbe) — “...and how should one conduct oneself? and he replied, “I went to my father and asked him.”

Later, however, the Rebbe Rashab conducted himself in the following way:²⁸

First he put on *Rashi tefillin* and davened the entire prayers until after *Aleinu*. He then took off the *shel rosh* of *Rashi* and put on the *shel rosh* of the *Shimusha Rabbah* tefillin. He then recited the *Shema* and learned a chapter of *Mishnayos*. He took the tefillin off and put on the tefillin of *Rabbeinu Tam*. He first said the *Shema*, and then *Vayedaber*, and then *Tehillim*, as divided for

25. For more information regarding the *maamarim* said at the Bar Mitzvah see — *Likkutei Dibburim*, Vol. I, p. 104a; *Sefer HaSichos 5687*, p. 174; 5703, p. 137.

26. A deep Talmudic discussion.

27. See *Igros Kodesh* of the Rebbe, Vol. XI, p. 306, 366; Vol. XV, p. 437.

28. See *HaYom Yom*, entry 19 Av.

each day of the month. He then learned one page of *Gemara*, (it appears that he learned the *Gemara* wearing the tefillin of *Rabbeinu Tam* — the writer). He then took off the *shel rosh* of *Rabbeinu Tam* and put on the *shel rosh* of *Raavad* tefillin, said the *Shema*, and learned Talmud *Yerushalmi*. The amount of *Yerushalmi* that he learned varied. He learned three pages of *Gemara* every day, one after *Shacharis*, one after *Minchah* and one after *Maariv*. *Mishnayos* he only studied in the morning. He also said a chapter from Torah, *Neviim* and *Kesuvim*.²⁹ Although the *Tanach* was open in front of him, he actually said it by heart.

Even in his youth, he was a “*frummer Yid*.”³⁰ The Raza used to give him a hard time, although he kept the obligation of honoring an older brother. The Raza used to fight with Devorah Leah (his sister) and pull her hair, however the Rebbe Rashab was even careful not to touch her and the like. Once they played *Rebbe* and *Chassid*. The Rebbe Rashab said, “I do not want to be a *Rebbe*, I want to be a *chassid*. There is only one G-d and one *Rebbe*, but a lot of *chassidim*.”³¹ Because he was still a child he pronounced the word *Rebbe* with a *yud* instead of a *raish*, so that it sounded like *Yebbe*.

Every day they would visit the Tzemach Tzedek.³² They said *Shema* and *Boruch Shem* and he would give them a *Tzvayer*.³³ Once, at a time of *Yechidus* — and this was after the passing of the Rabbonis, when they were living with the Tzemach Tzedek — the Rebbe Rashab, who was then between three and a half and four, also wanted to enter the room, claiming that he too should be allowed into *Yechidus*. The Raza did not want to allow him in. When permission was refused, he started to cry. The Tzemach Tzedek heard him cry and asked, “Why is he crying?” and he said they should allow him in. At that time, the Rebbe Rashab had a nurse, Nyanke, a non-Jew, and she was the reason that the Rebbe spoke Russian. The

29. See *Sefer HaSichos* 5696, p. 54; 5704, p. 25.

30. See *Kuntres Chanoch LeNaar*, p. 9.

31. See *Toras Menachem, Hisvaadiyos* 5711, Vol. 1 p. 27.

32. See *Kuntres Chanoch LeNaar*, p. 8.

33. A small Russian coin (half a *kopke*).

Rebbe Rashab did not want to leave her outside and insisted that she too enter, pushing her between the oven and the wall. He went over to the Tzemach Tzedek and asked, "What should one ask you, *Zaide?*" The Tzemach Tzedek took him in his arms and placed his, (the Rebbe Rashab's) hand on his beard and said, "Straighten out my beard, straighten out my beard." He concluded, "I think it is straight." The Rebbe Rashab recounted this story many times with great satisfaction.³⁴ He asked him if he wanted money and he replied in the negative. But he gave him a few coins to give to *chassidim* for *mashke*, whereupon he went out, saying to the *chassidim*, "The *Zaide*, the *Yebbe*, gave this for *mashke*."

Many years later, he used to stay up the entire night Thursday night, and the entire night after *Shabbos*.³⁵ On Friday he washed in hot water, (although not his entire body).³⁶ On Friday afternoon he slept for two to three hours.³⁷ He would cut his nails³⁸ together with the loose skin around them.

He reviewed the *Sedra* on Friday afternoon verse by verse.³⁹ In general he did not go to the *Mikvah* on Friday but he went on *Shabbos* morning, at 3-4 in the morning.

Between *Minchah* and *Maariv* on *Shabbos* every minute was precious.

On *Shabbos* day, he came to *daven* at 8:30 a.m. and sometimes earlier. He would finish *davening* at 3:30-4:00 in the afternoon. At first, he began *davening* at 6:30 in the morning since it was his mother's wish that everybody wait for him for the meal — and he didn't want to keep everybody waiting so he started very early. However, his early start upset his mother even more, so he returned to start *davening* at 8:30 as before.

During the week, he would finish *davening* at 2:30-3:00 in the afternoon. However, there were times that he finished with

34. See *Sefer HaSichos Kayitz 5700*, p. 99; *5704*, p. 95.

35. See *Kuntres Chanoch LeNaar*, p. 10. In those times he used to learn, write and focus his thoughts on concepts in Nigleh and chassidus.

36. See *Shulchan Aruch HaRav, Orach Chaim*, 260.

37. See *Toras Shalom*, p. 13.

38. See *Shulchan Aruch, ibid.*

39. *Shulchan Aruch, ibid.* 285:6.

the *minyán*, or some twenty minutes after that, and sometimes he did not finish until 5:30 in the afternoon.

RESHIMOS NO. 17 22 SIVAN 5702

BAR MITZVAH OF KAZARNOVSKY⁴⁰

The Bar Mitzvah Avraham made for Yitzchak and the challenge of Og

(See also letter to my cousin, Menachem Mendel Schneerson)

This is the occasion when the Bar Mitzvah enters the Camp of Israel accepting upon himself the yoke of Torah and *mitzvos*, and when he and his friends and relatives rejoice.

However, from where are we to draw the energy for this in such troubled times, when our brethren are persecuted and oppressed?⁴¹

“The actions of the Fathers are a sign to the children.”⁴²

In the thousands of years of Jewish history, there were times when “each man sat under his vine,”⁴³ and there were times of immense troubles, when “because of our sins we were exiled from our land.”⁴⁴ History teaches us a lesson both for the future and the present.⁴⁵

The Torah relates to us the story of the first Bar Mitzvah, the Bar Mitzvah of Yitzchak in the home of the first Jew, Avraham.⁴⁶

“The child grew and was weaned. Avraham made a great feast on the day Yitzchak was weaned.”⁴⁷ The *Midrash*⁴⁸ comments that the particular significance of “weaning” is that on the day of his Bar Mitzvah, Yitzchak was weaned off the evil inclination, since on that day the good inclination enters.⁴⁹ Avraham made a great feast — that is to say, a feast for the

40. The son of R. Shlomo Aharon Kazarnovsky.

41. This *Reshimah* was written at the height of the Holocaust.

42. *Midrash Tanchuma, Lech Lecha* 9; *Bereishis Rabbah* 40:6; *Ramban Lech Lecha* 12:6.

43. *I Melachim* 5:5.

44. Text of *Mussaf* for Yom Tov.

45. See *Likkutei Dibburim*, Vol. I, p. 85b.

46. “Avraham was one” — *Yechezkel* 33:24 — meaning he was the first Jew.

47. *Vayeira* 21:8.

48. *Bereishis Rabbah* 53:10.

49. See *Matnos Kehunah, ibid.* See also commentary of *Maharzav, ibid.*

great, for he invited to this feast all the great personalities of the time, including the giant, Og.

The *Midrash* continues:⁵⁰ “They said to Og, “Did you not say that Avraham was a sterile mule and is incapable of having a child?” Og replied, “What was his present? A small and lowly being — I could lift my finger against him and crush him.” *Hashem* said to Og: “Why are you making fun of this gift? By your life, you will live to see thousands and tens of thousands of his descendents, and you will eventually fall by his hand, as it states,⁵¹ “And G-d said to Moshe, do not fear him, for I have delivered him into your hand.”

What is difficult to understand in the discussion with Og is their preoccupation with the birth of Yitzchak, when they are here sitting at the Bar Mitzvah celebration. There are other views in the *Midrash* that the feast took place at the time of weaning itself, when Yitzchak was weaned from his mothers milk,⁵² and even others suggest that the feast was the feast of circumcision.⁵³ It would seem that the simple meaning of Og’s claim is more consonant with their views. However, one may suggest that Og was not so much wondering about the physical birth of Yitzchak as that he was questioning the ability of Avraham to rear a child that would follow in his, Avraham’s, footsteps.

What Og was really getting at was that the way of Avraham may have been fine for him but it would not attract the youth! When Og claimed that Avraham could not rear a child, he was not so much referring to the physical ability to rear children as to his ability to rear a generation that would continue in his spiritual path.

In fact Og had a view on youth in general. The verse⁵⁴ says of Og, “For only Og king of the Bashan was left of the remaining Rephaim; behold! his bed was an iron bed...” The *Rashbam* explains that this refers to his cot — his cot was an

50. See the commentaries on the *midrash* who explain the *midrash* as it is presented here.

51. *Chukas* 21:34.

52. The view of the Rabbis, and the view taken by *Rashi* on the verse.

53. *Devarim Rabbah*, ch. 81.

54. *Devarim* 3:11.

iron cot. The most important thing to Og was the strength and health of the body, with complete disregard of spirituality. When it came to keeping the commandments of G-d, Og claimed that one ought only to keep those *mitzvos* that the intellect can comprehend. Furthermore, the motivation for keeping them was not because they were a Divine command, but because common sense demanded it.⁵⁵

This was why he told Avraham to go and save Lot, his nephew.⁵⁶ (However, one could suggest the opposite. It could be that the reason that Og advised Avraham to save Lot was precisely because it was irrational, and because he knew that Avraham, being a man of faith, above and beyond reason, would do the irrational and go and fight the Kings. In this way, Og figured that Avraham would be killed and that he would then marry Sarah. This approach explains the juxtaposition of stories in the *Midrash*, “Og came and found Avraham engaged in *mitzvos* — the *mitzvah* of eating *matzah*. He said — this Avraham is zealous, if I tell him that his nephew has been captured, he will go out to war, and get himself killed. Then I’ll be able to marry his wife, Sarah.” What prompted Og was that he saw Avraham engaged in the *mitzvah* of *matzah*, which is the bread of faith,⁵⁷ the opposite of the rationality of *chametz*.⁵⁸ It was then he reasoned that this Avraham was zealous, that is, unlimited by intellect, and that, by telling him that Lot was captured, even though, rationally speaking, there would be no point to chasing after the Kings, Avraham would nevertheless practice irrational self-sacrifice, chase after the Kings, and be killed.⁵⁹

From here we can see that a person who only follows his intellect can deceive another into thinking that he is doing a

55. The opposite of the truth, for even *mitzvos* which may be rationalized must be kept not because one understands them, but because they are a Divine command, as the *Rambam* rules, in the Laws of *Melachim* Ch. 8, in reference to the seven Noachide laws, that they must be kept because G-d commanded them in the Torah, and one who keeps them only because his intellect requires it is not counted among the righteous gentiles.

56. *Bereishis Rabbah* 42:8; *Niddah* 61a.

57. *Zohar*, Vol. II, p. 183b; See *Likkutei Torah*, *Tzav*, p. 13d.

58. See *Torah Or*, *Vayakhel*, p. 89c; *Likkutei Torah*, *Shir HaShirim*, p. 14d.

59. Although saving Lot made sense, chasing after the Kings was irrational.

mitzvah when in truth he has the opposite intention: in this case, not to save Lot—on the contrary, he wanted Avraham to be killed, so that he could marry Sarah.

The verse describing Og continues: “...in Rabbah of the children of Ammon.” This was the capital city. Og wanted his iron cot to set an example in the city that, as far as the education of youth was concerned, the main point to be stressed was the physical prowess of the body without any regard for spirituality.

Now we will understand why Og felt himself challenged at the Bar Mitzvah of Yitzchak. Og had always maintained that Avraham would never be able to rear children in his faith, and, as mentioned above, himself made the health of the body the priority when educating youth. At Yitzchak’s Bar Mitzvah, it was clear to all that Avraham had in fact succeeded in rearing Yitzchak to follow in his spiritual path, and Og was therefore challenged.

Og replied: “This is a present,” that is to say, the education of Yitzchak until this age had been a present from Above, and had no place below. He argued that it would not grow and would never be established — for with his little finger, he could destroy it.

Hashem responded, “Are you making fun of this present? You will have longevity of years⁶⁰ and you will fall into the hands of the thousands of his children.” Physical strength and health can only stand on the firm foundation of faith and spirituality, for when there is no spirituality, why shouldn’t the child sin and chase after superfluous things? This proved to be the case in the end, when eventually Og fell into the hands of the descendants of Yitzchak. Their physical strength rested on solid spiritual foundations.

This is why the war with Og was a physical war⁶¹ — a war with the sword,⁶² unlike the war of Yericho and the war with

60. *Bereishis Rabbah*, 42:8.

61. And although the *Talmud Berachos* 54a relates that miracles happened in this war, the miracle was only that *Hashem* prevented Og from throwing a mountain on the *Bnai Yisrael*, however the actual killing of Og was done by Moshe who jumped and struck his ankles — a physical action.

Sancherev, both of which were fought by supernatural means. Victory in this war with Og showed that physical prowess and victory in battle are dependent on the health of the soul, which only comes with perfect faith — to the point of self-sacrifice — in G-d.

RESHIMOS NO. 19

The difference between the Bar Mitzvah Avraham made for Yitzchak and the Bar Mitzvah Yitzchak made for Yaakov. Avraham — a test from without, Yitzchak — a test from within.

The Jews consider someone to have become a grown-up at the age of 13 (except in a few instances where one needs to be 18, 20⁶³ or 40⁶⁴) whereas with other nations, one is only considered to be a grown-up at the age of 20, 21, etc.

The reason for this age difference:

The way in which a non-Jewish nation is constituted is that after a period during which they are nomads and shepherds, they settle on a piece of land, choose a king, and then decide on a constitution. The constitution of the Jewish nation was somewhat different. Immediately after the exodus from Egypt, while they were in a desolate land,⁶⁵ they started keeping Torah and *mitzvos*, beginning with the commandment, “I am the L-rd your G-d”⁶⁶ and that this G-d is not a graven image,⁶⁷ all of which was an act of faith, beyond reason and rationale, and not necessarily perceived by the five senses. It was this faith that served as the basis for their constitution as a people.

62. As the verse states — *Chukas* 21:24 — Israel smote him with the edge of the sword.

63. See *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim*, Ch. 53:6-8, in reference the appointment of a *Shliach Tzibbur* that he should have a beard. *Yoreh Deah* 1:5 in reference to the *Shechitah* of a child, that one should not give a license to a *Shochet* under the age of 18. *Choshen Mishpat* 7:3 in reference to the age of being appointed a Judge.

64. See *Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah*, 242:31 in the note, based on *Rashi, Avodah Zarah* 19b, in reference to the age a person is deemed fit to render *halachic* decisions. See also *Tosafos, Sotah* 22b that these 40 years start from the age he started learning and not from birth.

65. *Yirmeyahu* 2:2; see *Rashi Bo* 12:39.

66. *Yisro* 20:2.

67. See *Nitzutzei Zohar on Zohar*, Vol. III, p. 128a.

A non-Jew comes of age at twenty, etc., for then he is of age to go out to war and establish for himself a land to live — the basis of his constitution as a people. However, a Jew is considered to be a grown-up at the age of thirteen, for it is then that he fully comprehends the great merit and responsibility that he has as a member of the People of Israel.

Among the Jewish people themselves, there are those who are the “sons of Avraham” and there are those who are the “sons of Yitzchak,⁶⁸ their *avodah* and way of life different, and consequently each exposed to different categories of trials and tribulations in the course of their lives.

Avraham’s ‘lifestyle’ was one of travelling through different countries, striving greatly so that even the Arabs should say, “Blessed is He who said, and the world came into existence,”⁶⁹ and arguing with Nimrod about idol worship.⁷⁰ It therefore follows that at the Bar Mitzvah that Avraham made for his son Yitzchak, his challenge and test came from those to whom Avraham’s way of life was something alien. As recounted in the *Midrash*, Og claimed that Avraham would not be able to pass on his spiritual heritage to the next generation, and that G-dly service beyond rationality did not go down well with the young. The rebuttal came in the fact that, in the end, Og fell to the descendants of Yitzchak.⁷¹

Yitzchak however was a “perfect sacrifice,” who could not leave the Land of Israel,⁷² nor marry a maidservant,⁷³ nor even look upon idol worship, as the Sages⁷⁴ comment on the verse,⁷⁵ “and his eyes were dimmed;”⁷⁶ and therefore Yitzchak did not engage in polemics with idol worshipers. At the Bar Mitzvah of the sons of Yitzchak, the test came not from those distant, but

68. An expression of the *Zohar*, Vol. III, p. 219a.

69. See *Sotah* 10b; *Rashi*, *Vayeira* 21:33.

70. See *Bereishis Rabbah* 38:13.

71. See at length *Reshimos* No. 17.

72. See *Bereishis Rabbah* 64:3; *Rashi*, *Toldos* 26:2.

73. *Rashi*, *ibid.* 25:26.

74. *Midrash Tanchuma*, *Toldos* 8, mentioned in *Rashi* on the verse.

75. *Toldos* 27:1.

76. By the smoke of the wives of Esav who offered incense to idols. See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. V, p. 140.

from within, from Esav, Yaakov's brother, as the Sages⁷⁷ point out, on the verse,⁷⁸ "And the lads grew up" that is, became Bar Mitzvah — although the two boys went to school together, after Bar Mitzvah they went their separate ways. Esav became a hunter, in the manner of kings, like Nimrod, who was a hunter,⁷⁹ mingling and assimilating with the creations etc., whereas Yaakov sat in the study-halls of Shem and Ever, who at that time were many hundreds of years old. Yaakov sat and learned from those sages who were many years his senior, whereas, Esav preferred to mix with people his own age.

(The concept of Shem and Ever in *Chassidus* is explained in *Or HaTorah*,⁸⁰ that Shem refers to the Written law and Ever to the Oral tradition.)

We can take this concept a step further by explaining the main difference between Yaakov and Esav. We find in the *Midrash*⁸¹ that Esav asked how one may tithe straw. Straw is secondary to the seed, and it is animal fodder, which is analogous to the animal soul and the body.

Although the animal side of man requires food and drink, and the like, this should only be secondary to the spiritual seed within — which is the way of Yaakov. Esav, however, desired to tithe, that is, to draw holiness into straw,⁸² which for him was the essence. (Esav had a connection with holiness; as mentioned above, he had learned Torah until the age of Bar Mitzvah, unlike Og, for example, who had no connection, and also opposed such a connection. However, Esav wanted his connection with holiness to be drawn only to the physical side of things.)

In the end, he (Esav) despised the birthright,⁸³ rejected any notion of Divinity and transgressed five prohibitions on the very day of his Bar Mitzvah.⁸⁴ In comparison, Yaakov, holding

77. *Bereishis Rabbah* 63:10; *Rashi* on verse.

78. *Toldos* 25:27.

79. *Noach* 10:9.

80. *Toldos*, p. 145b.

81. *Bereishis Rabbah* 63:10.

82. For a full explanation see additions to *Torah Or, Megillas Esther*, p. 119c.

83. *Toldos* 25:34.

84. *Bava Basra* 16b.

the view that the material world (straw) is secondary to the spiritual, merited the promise,⁸⁵ “And the house of Yaakov shall be like fire and the house of Esav straw.” He became one with Torah, of which is said,⁸⁶ “Are My words not like fire” which can burn the house of Esav (straw).

I wish to bless the Bar Mitzvah, his parents and teachers, thanks to whom he knows that the learning until now is only the beginning, and that, like Yaakov, he needs to continue in the study-halls of Shem and Eber, and that with his Torah and *mitzvos* he will hasten the removal of all concealments, until there will come the time when, “And your teacher will no longer hide from you”⁸⁷ with immediate redemption through our righteous *Mashiach*.

RESHIMOS NO. 21 — AGE 13 FOR MITZVOS

The proof that Levi was exactly thirteen on the day he killed the inhabitants of Shchem — the source of the age for Bar Mitzvah.

The *Mishnah* in *Pirkei Avos* 5:21 states: “At the age of 13 one becomes obligated to keep the *mitzvos*.”

The *Bartenura* comments: that the age of thirteen is the age of Bar Mitzvah is derived Biblically from the verse,⁸⁸ “And it was on the third day... and (Shimon and Levi) each man took his sword...” At that time, Levi was thirteen and he is referred to as *Ish*,⁸⁹ a man. From this we may see that the Scripture regards a thirteen year old as a man.

There is much debate regarding the actual age of Levi at this time.

Rashi, in his commentary on *Avos*, calculates that Levi was eleven years old when Yaakov left the house of Lavan. When we add the six months of the journey, and the eighteen months of the stay at Sukkos, Levi turns out to be exactly thirteen at the time of the episode with Shchem. Based on this comment of

85. *Ovadiah* 1:18; see *Rashi*, *Vayeitzei* 30:25.

86. *Yirmeyahu* 23:29; see *Berachos* 22a.

87. *Yeshayahu* 30:20; see *Tanya*, Ch. 36.

88. *Bereishis* 34:25.

89. See *Tosafos Yom Tov* at the beginning of the second chapter of tractate *Zavim*.

Rashi in *Avos*,⁹⁰ the *Tosafos Yom Tov* queries the comment of *Rashi* in *Chumash*, where *Rashi* explains that Yaakov was punished for the twenty-two years that, on account of his absence, he did not honor his father; twenty years in the house of Lavan and two years on the way... eighteen months in Sukkos and six months in Beis El.⁹¹ The *Tosafos Yom Tov* asks that it is clear from *Chumash*⁹² that the settlement in Beis El was *after* the episode of Shchem. Therefore, according to *Rashi* in *Chumash*, we are missing the six months that would bring the age of Levi up to thirteen. We must say that, before Yaakov came to Sukkos, he spent six months on the journey, which, together with the eighteen months in Sukkos, makes Levi exactly thirteen at the time of the Shchem episode.

R. Akiva Eiger in his glossary notes on *Avos* is surprised with this question of the *Tosafos Yom Tov*, for the Talmud in *Megillah* 17a, states clearly that after Yaakov left the house of Lavan, he spent eighteen months at Sukkos and six months at Beis El. The difficulty, claims *R. Akiva Eiger*, is not with the comment of *Rashi* in *Chumash* (which is consonant with what the Talmud states in *Megillah*) but with *Rashi's* comment in *Avos*, that claims that six months were spent on the way.

However, this only strengthens the question as to the exact calculation of Levi's age, for if we say that Yaakov did not spend six months on the way, we are forced to conclude that Levi was only twelve and a half at the time of the Shchem episode?

Furthermore, the *Tosafos Yom Tov* writes: "If you reckon the thirteen years that Yaakov stayed with Lavan after he married Leah, and take into consideration the approximately two years that it took for Reuven, Shimon and Levi to be born — based on the calculation that each of them was born at the end of seven months — it comes out that Levi was eleven when they

90. The exact wording of *Rashi* in *Avos* is: "And then Levi was 13. If you reckon the two years that Yaakov spent at Beis El." *Tosafos Yom Tov* interprets this *Rashi* to mean, the two years that Yaakov spent on the way *until* he reached Beis El, which suggests that in addition to the 18 months at Sukkos, he spent 6 months on the way.

91. See also *Midrash Lekach Tov* on the verse.

92. See *Vayishlach* 35:1-3 and commentary of *Rashi*.

left. Add on another six months for the way and eighteen months in Sukkos, and the result is that Levi was thirteen at the time of the story of Shchem.”

This calculation is only approximate, for it is only a rough estimate that two years were taken for three births, each pregnancy lasting seven months,⁹³ but he is not exact in his calculation.⁹⁴

In the commentary that is attributed to *Rashi* on Tractate *Nazir* 29b, *Rashi* comments, “the title *ish* is reserved for a thirteen year old and no less, and we have a tradition that Shimon and Levi at that time were thirteen, and whoever wishes to calculate this may go and calculate.”

THIRTEEN TO THE DAY

It is possible to calculate this in such a way that the age of Levi was exactly thirteen, and the calculation is exact *to the day*. How?

1. As soon as Yaakov married Leah, she conceived.⁹⁵

93. See also *Machzor Vitri* in his commentary on *Avos* (*ibid.*) where he also approximates 18 months or 2 years for the three pregnancies of Reuven, Shimon and Levi.

94. *Rabbeinu Bachaye* writes (*Vayishlach, ibid.*): “Leah gave birth to Reuven in 7 months, and then to Shimon in 7 months. It therefore follows that when Yaakov left the house of Lavan at the end of 20 years, Shimon was 12 less two months. Yaakov stayed at Sukkos for 18 months and then came to Shchem. At that time, Shimon was 13 years and 4 months, and Levi was 12 and 9 months, and the verse calls him an *ish*. See also the commentary of *Maharzav* on *Bereishis Rabbah* 80:10.

Zayis Raanan on *Yalkut Shimoni, Vayishlach, Remez* 135 comments: “When Yaakov left the house of Lavan he (Levi) was 11, for Yaakov was 13 years in the house of Lavan after he married Leah, and he was 18 months in Sukkos as the Talmud states in *Megillah*, therefore Levi was twelve and a half at the time of Shchem. It is therefore surprising that the verse calls him *Ish* for he was not yet 13. Possibly, since he was called an *ish* for he was a *mufla samuch l'ish* — that is, nearly a man (a *halachic* status conferred on a boy nearly 13 as regards his vows — See *Nazir* 29b.)

95. For Reuven was conceived on the wedding night, as Yaakov attests in *Bereishis* 49:3, *Raishis Oni*. See at length the *Reshimos* Hebrew edition for lengthy footnotes on this subject. We shall present them here in brief. See *Bereishis Rabbah* 45:4; *Yevamos* 34a/b; *Tosafos Yevamos* 76a; *Nodah BiYehudah Mahadura Kammah, Even HaEzer*, Responsa No. 22; *Ran, Kiddushin* 10a; *Heoros* and *Chiddushim* of R. Zalman of Zhitomir (a grandson of the Tzemach Tzedek) who refutes the opinion of the *Nodah BiYehudah* based on Responsa of *Rif* No. 38.

2. He waited until after the seven days of the marriage feast, and then worked a further seven years for Rachel.

3. He worked six years for the sheep.

4. He escaped from Lavan for seven days.

5. He stayed one day at Maavar Yabok.

6. He stayed eighteen months at Sukkos.

7. He arrived at Shchem on Erev Shabbos, and that is why he encamped outside the city. He obviously stayed there for Shabbos, and it was on Sunday that Dinah went out.

8. Add another two days, because it was on the third day, “when they were hurting” that Shimon and Levi each man took his sword, and on that day Levi became Bar Mitzvah.

All this may be deduced from *Bereishis* 29-34, *Megillah* 17a, *Bereishis Rabbah* ch. 79.

(The reason why the *Chumash* does not reckon the extra days over and above the twenty-two years mentioned in the Talmud *Megillah*, and the twenty years mentioned in the verse 31:41, is because these days do not even add up to a month. That is obvious.)

It comes out that, in total, the period after the marriage of Leah until the episode of Shchem was exactly thirteen years eighteen months and 20⁹⁶ (or 21⁹⁷) days.

Leah gave birth after seven months — as stated by *Pirkei D.R’Eliezer*,⁹⁸ quoted in *Yalkut Shimoni*.⁹⁹ The Talmud, *Rosh Hashanah* 11a, states that “one who gives birth in seven months may also give birth after six months and two days.”¹⁰⁰

For this concept in *Kabbalah* — see *Likkutei Torah* of *AriZal*, *Parshas Vayeira*; and *Etz Chayim* 16:5 (end).

96. 7 days of the feast, 7 days running from Lavan, 1 day at *Maavar Yabok*, 5 days from *Erev Shabbos* arrival at Shchem until the third day after the circumcision = 20 days.

97. It appears that the Rebbe debated if he should add another day because of the journey from *Maavar Yabok* until Sukkos (or from Sukkos to Shchem) — something not mentioned in the *Chumash*. According to this calculation, Levi would have been 13 years and one day.

98. Ch. 36.

99. *Vayeitze*, *Remez* 125 (end).

100. See *Tosafos ibid.* — in reference to the birth of Yitzchak and the calculation of 6 months and 2 days.

Therefore, Levi was born eighteen months¹⁰¹ and twenty days after the marriage of Yaakov to Leah, taking into account three pregnancies, each of which was six months and two days — which equals eighteen months and six days — and adding fourteen days on account of the “*Tumas Laidah*” — impurity contracted by a woman who has given birth — of Reuven and Shimon.¹⁰²

According to the above calculation — that the episode of Shchem took place thirteen years, eighteen months and twenty days after the wedding of Yaakov to Leah — it follows that Levi was exactly thirteen years old on the day of the episode of Shchem.¹⁰³

One could possibly bring a proof that the Matriarchs gave birth after six months and two days from the fact that over the course of seven years, there were born to Yaakov eleven sons and one daughter.¹⁰⁴ It appears from the story as it is related in *Chumash* that they were born one after the other, that is, that it never happened that the Matriarchs gave birth at the same time. Rather, it was only after Leah had four sons that Rachel gave Bilhah to Yaakov and she had two sons, and then Zilpah had two sons, and only after this did Leah have another two sons and a daughter. This also appears to be the case, based on their order as they are engraved on the *Ephod*, attested to by the verse¹⁰⁵ as “in order of their birth”. See *Seforno, Bereishis* 30:8.

If all the pregnancies had been for a full seven months, twelve pregnancies of seven months = 84 months = 7 years. This gives no time, however, for keeping the “*Tumas Laidah*,” the seven days of impurity. (This is obviously only a difficulty according to the opinion that holds that even in the Diaspora

101. See also Vilna Gaon on *Avos, ibid.*, who also reckons only 18 months for the three pregnancies, each being 6 months only. He does not include however the days of impurity due to birth, nor the 20 days as calculated above.

102. Each period of impurity being a week — see *Tazria* (beginning).

103. See *Midrash Sechel Tov, Vayishlach ibid.*, who is also exact in the calculation, however he enters into the question as to whether the months of the years were solar or lunar, and he arrives at the conclusion that they were lunar months.

104. See *Pirkei D.R'Eliezer*, and *Yalkut Shimoni, ibid.*, and commentary of *Radal, ibid.*

105. *Tetzaveh* 28:10.

the Patriarchs kept the entire Torah.¹⁰⁶) One must therefore say that they gave birth in less than seven months (the minimum being six months and two days). Using this reckoning, 12 pregnancies at 6 months 2 days = 6 years and 24 days. To this, one must add the weeks of impurity due to childbirth.¹⁰⁷

This is not, however, a conclusive proof, for one may say that only their births were one after the other but not their conception, that is, there is no reason to say that only after one gave birth did the other conceive. Rather, it could have been that another one was already pregnant, only the births were consecutive. It may therefore also be posited that in fact they were all born at a full seven months.

It should be noted that, according to the *Targum of Yonasan Ben Uziel*, it is clear that their mothers were pregnant with Dinah and Yosef at the same time.¹⁰⁸ From this the possibility may be deduced that in the case of the other tribes, born from two different Matriarchs, they were actually pregnant at the same time, but gave birth one after the other.¹⁰⁹

*Yalkut Shimon*¹¹⁰ states that Reuven was born on the 14th of Kislev... Shimon on the 28th of Teves... Levi on the 16th Nissan... Yehuda on the 15th of Sivan... Dan on the 9th of Elul... Naftali on the 5th of Tishrei... Gad on the 10th of Cheshvan... Asher on the 20th of Shvat... Yissachar on the 10th of Av and Zevulun on the 7th of Tishrei.

It is a mitzvah to explain this *Yalkut*, for, according to the calculation of the *Yalkut* — and following the opinion of all the commentaries that the order of their births was Reuven,

106. As is the opinion of *Rashi*, *Vayishlach* 32:5, and not like the *Ramban* who is of the opinion that they only kept the Torah inside the Land of Israel. See at length *Proshas Derachim* and *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. V, p. 142.

107. Seven weeks altogether, 3 of Leah, between Reuven Shimon, Levi and Yehudah, one of Bilhah, one of Zilpah, and a further two of Leah between Yissachar Zevulun and Dinah.

108. See *Bereishis* 30:21.

109. It appears in the original *Reshimah*, that the Rebbe added the following note later.
 "In *Seder Olam* (2) it says that the tribes were born at 7 months. *Ibn Ezra*, *Bereishis* 30:23 and *Shmos* 2:2, explains that they were born after 9 months. See also *Pirkei D.R'Eliezer* Ch. 36 and commentary of *Radal*. *Lekach Tov*, *Bereishis* 29:32, *Midrash Tadshai*, *Chizkuni* and *Ohel Yosef* (on *Ibn Ezra*) *Vayeitzei* 30:25. *Bachaye*, *Shmos* 1:6, R. Epstein in his book *The early history of the Jews*."

110. On the verse in *Shmos*, "And Yosef died".

Shimon, Levi, Yehuda, Dan, Naftali, Gad, Asher, Yissachar, Zevulun, Yosef — Yosef was born at least fifteen years and three months after Yaakov came to dwell with Lavan.¹¹¹ How does this fit in with what is explicit in the verses: that when Rachel gave birth to Yosef, there was completed the *fourteen* years which Yaakov had served Lavan for his two daughters?¹¹²

On all that has been said, one may further note:

1) *Tosafos* in *Sanhedrin*¹¹³ states that in previous generations, they were capable of conceiving at the age of eight. Accordingly, they must have matured much earlier, and what proof, therefore, do we have from the sons of Yaakov that the time of Bar Mitzvah is thirteen, as derived from the age of Levi — when in their generations it was possible they matured much earlier and were therefore an *ish* much earlier?¹¹⁴

2) The *Rosh* writes in Responsum 16 that the age of thirteen for mitzvos is an age that has been received as a tradition from Moshe on Sinai.¹¹⁵

3) On the verse,¹¹⁶ “And the lads grew,” *Rashi* comments that at that time they were thirteen. However, *Rashi* on a later verse¹¹⁷ comments that on that day Avraham died, so that he should not see Esav falling into bad company. All the commentaries¹¹⁸ ask, that when Avraham died, Yaakov and Esav were

111. The calculation: after seven years of work, Yaakov married Leah. If so, Reuven who was born in Kislev was born in the ninth year, Shimon born in Teves in the 10th year, Levi born in Nissan, in the 11th year, Yehudah born in Sivan in the 12th year. Bilhah gave birth to Dan in Etul of that year, and to Naftali in Tishrei of the 14th year. Zilpah gave birth to Gad in Cheshvan of that year and to Asher in Shvat in the 15th year. Leah gave birth to Yissachar in Av of that year and to Zevulun in Tishrei of the 16th year — a passage of over 15 years. Rochel could not have given birth to Yosef less than three months after Leah gave birth to Zevulun, for *Rashi*, *Vayeitze* 30:21 explains that only after Leah saw she was again pregnant (which takes three months to be noticeable) did she pray that her new pregnancy should be a girl so that Rachel should not be any worse than the maidservants.

112. See *Seder HaDoros* in regards to the birth of Yosef who asks a similar question as regards the 13 years of Levi.

113. 69a, *Beyadua*.

114. This question is also asked in Responsa of Maharil 51 — see *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. XV, p. 289 note 3.

115. See *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. V, p. 76, 326; *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. X, p. 70; Vol. 15, p. 291.

116. *Toldos* 25:27.

117. *Ibid.* 30.

118. See *Daas Zekenim MiBaalei Tosafos, Mizrachi, Sifsei Chachamim*. See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. I, p. 49; Vol. V, p. 370; Vol. XX, p. 114 note 41.

fifteen.¹¹⁹ It may be that full maturity was reached only when they showed signs of puberty, and that they only showed such signs when they were fifteen, and that Avraham did not pay that much attention to the conduct of Esav (to the extent that it should disturb him enough for *Hashem* to shorten his years, in order to spare him the sight of Esav forsaking the path of righteousness) until the age of fifteen. Whereas, other people (who did not know about the signs) reckoned from the age of thirteen, for they presumed that signs of puberty were showing at this age.¹²⁰ This would help explain the contradiction between the two comments of *Rashi*.

RESHIMOS NO. 59 — 28 ELUL 5689

*A Bar Mitzvah letter written to the Rebbe's cousin,
Menachem Mendel Schneerson.*

Entry in diary on 28 Elul 5689 — a Bar Mitzvah letter written to the Rebbe's cousin, Menachem Mendel (both on his father's side, his father being R. Shmuel Schneerson — the brother of R. Levi Yitzchak, the Rebbe's father, and on his mother's side, his mother being Miriam Gittel, the sister of Rebbetzin Chanah, the Rebbe's mother, who were both the daughters of R. Meir Shlomo Halevi Yanovski).

28 Elul 5689, Riga

My Dear Menachem,

In celebration of your thirteenth birthday, the day of your Bar Mitzvah, I wanted to talk with you face-to-face, but until we actually meet in person, I must make do with putting my words into writing, hoping that, in time, after you have read thoroughly all I have written, you will reply, either in writing or verbally, telling me, your thoughts and reflections on what I have written.

One would have thought that on the day of a Bar Mitzvah — when the boy becomes obligated to keep the *mitzvos* like a

119. Avraham lived for 175 years, and when Yaakov and Esav were born, Yitzchak was 60 years old, making Avraham 160. It therefore follows that Yaakov and Esav were 15 when Avraham died.

120. See *Niddah* 46a, Encyclopedia Talmudis entry for *Gadol*, p. 140.

grown-up — the day he is considered an *Adam* — the day that his *yetzer tov* enters and he becomes a fully-fledged member of *klal Yisrael* — that *tachanun* should not be recited, and the day distinguished by desisting from work, like a *Yom Tov*.

However, *tachanun* is recited and a normal learning schedule is kept.

The reason for this is that none of us were created to spend life as during a festival, rather, man was born to toil.¹²¹ The world is not a wedding-feast,¹²² and man is not to don his *Shabbos* clothes and indulge in festivities all his days like a *Yom Tov* or *Shabbos*. Rather, this world is a world of action and work. “Today we must do them,”¹²³ “The work is great,”¹²⁴ and man was created to serve,¹²⁵ guard and toil,¹²⁶ and he is not free to desist from the work.¹²⁷

The first Bar Mitzvah mentioned in the Torah is that of Yitzchak. The Sages tell us that Avraham was a king.¹²⁸ He was very wealthy and had many servants, he was laden with livestock, silver and gold.¹²⁹ He also benefited from a treaty with the neighboring kings.¹³⁰ Despite his position, many mocked Avraham for the path he followed.¹³¹ However, with an uplifted arm did he publicize his faith and belief to all passers-by,¹³² thereby converting many a soul.¹³³

On the day of Yitzchak’s Bar Mitzvah, he made a great feast¹³⁴ and invited many kings and princes to participate. During the feast, some of those invited laughed at Avraham and scoffed at the *simchah* saying: “We are the powerful ones,

121. *Iyov* 5:7.

122. See *Eruvin* 54a.

123. *Vaes'chanan* (end).

124. *Avos* 2:15.

125. *Kiddushin* (end).

126. See *Bereishis* 2:15; *Zohar*, Vol. I, p. 27a.

127. *Avos*, Ch. 2 (end).

128. *Bereishis Rabbah* 42:5.

129. *Lech Lecha* 13:2.

130. *Vayeira* 22:27.

131. See *Midrash HaGadol, Lech Lecha* 12:3.

132. See *Sotah* 10b.

133. See *Lech Lecha* 12:5, *Rashi ibid. Rambam, Hilchos Avodah Zarah* 1:3.

134. See *Bereishis Rabbah* 53:10.

we have the might — with one finger we can humble him!”¹³⁵ However Avraham was not deterred or moved by them but continued in his path, in the way of the L-rd, and he guarded it, doing righteousness and justice.¹³⁶

As time passed, those who scoffed at Avraham fell into the hands of Avraham’s many thousands of descendants.¹³⁷

Regarding the second Bar Mitzvah (mentioned in the Torah) we are told that Yitzchak gave birth to two sons, Esav and Yaakov. Both went to school¹³⁸ and up to the age of Bar Mitzvah both were educated by Avraham and Yitzchak. Immediately after the age of Bar Mitzvah,¹³⁹ Esav began to visit houses of idol-worship; he mingled well with people and found favor in their eyes. Sorcery was on his lips and trickery in his mouth.¹⁴⁰ He wore expensive clothes,¹⁴¹ indulged in good food and was counted among the leading hunters and warriors of the time.

Yaakov his younger brother, although witnessing the success of his brother, and notwithstanding the scorn heaped upon him, was not moved from his path. From the day of Bar Mitzvah, he separated himself from his brother, and became an *Ish Tam*¹⁴² studying diligently in the study-halls of the elders Shem and Ever¹⁴³ all the days of his life, and he “went in the way of life.”

And let it be said of Yaakov — do not fear Yaakov¹⁴⁴ — the L-rd will bless you and multiply you — many peoples will serve you and nations will bow down unto you for you will be the master of your brother¹⁴⁵ and kings will go forth from your loins.¹⁴⁶ And it shall be in the end of days that there will be no

135. *Ibid.*, and commentary of *Matnos Kehunah*.

136. *Vayeira* 18:19.

137. *Bereishis Rabbah*, *ibid.*

138. *Bereishis Rabbah* 63:10; *Tanchuma*, *Ki Teitzei* 4.

139. See *Rashi*, *Toldos* 25:27.

140. *Bereishis Rabbah*, *ibid.*

141. See *Toldos* 27:15; *Rashi*, *ibid.*

142. *Toldos* 25:27.

143. *Rashi*, *ibid.*

144. *Yeshayahu* 44:2.

145. See *Toldos* 27:29.

146. *Vayishlach* 35:11.

remnant of the house of Esav,¹⁴⁷ I will send fire into Teman and it will consume the palaces of Bozrah.¹⁴⁸ And the remnant of Yaakov will be among the nations, in the midst of many peoples, like a lion among the animals of the forest... and there will be no rescuer.¹⁴⁹ For G-d has restored the pride of Yaakov.¹⁵⁰ For the day of G-d upon all the nations is close!¹⁵¹

One generation passed and Yaakov, also, celebrated the Bar Mitzvah of his two sons, Shimon and Levi. It was at that time that they were coerced with strength and force to change their ways and succumb to the will of others.

And it¹⁵² happened that when Yaakov traveled from Lavan his uncle to see his father Yitzchak — and Yaakov had a large family and¹⁵³ retinue — they rested on the way in Shchem.¹⁵⁴ Yaakov, his sons and daughters and the entire household numbered but a few¹⁵⁵ compared to the numerous and powerful Canaanites, Perizites and Hivites surrounding them. The sons of Yaakov wished neither to mix with their neighbors nor to learn their ways. They acquired a field, pitched their tents and served G-d.¹⁵⁶ However, the Hivites inquired of them and requested that they become united as a nation,¹⁵⁷ a nation that no longer stood alone.¹⁵⁸ They promised that the land extending before them would be for them a wide and bountiful land to inhabit and inherit.¹⁵⁹ The Hivites then abducted the daughter of Yaakov, and she was in the house of Shchem and Chamor, chieftains in the land. The sons of Yaakov were incensed by the disgraceful conduct of their neighbor. They were not afraid, they knew that right was on their side and they cut down Shchem with the sword.

147. *Ovadiah* 1:18.

148. *Amos* 1:12.

149. *Michah* 5:7.

150. *Nachum* 2:3.

151. *Ovadiah* 1:15.

152. *Vayetzzei* 31:17,18.

153. *Toldos* 26:14.

154. *Vayishlach* 33:18.

155. *Ibid.* 34:30.

156. *Ibid.* 33:19.

157. *Ibid.* 34:9.

158. See *Balak* 23:9.

159. *Vayishlach, ibid.*, 10,21.

When they were challenged with the question¹⁶⁰ — “Were you not afraid of the Hivites and the Perizites?” they replied, “We will not rest, for a disgrace has happened in Israel, it shall never happen again.” It was precisely at that time that Shimon and Levi celebrated their Bar Mitzvah. Precisely at that moment they fought against any injustice and disgrace and defended with all their might their religion and customs.

May G-d grant that from the day of Bar Mitzvah you should continually grow to be faithful to all that is holy to us and guard and defend all that is precious to us. You should be an example in your way of life and conduct for a “name and beauty” among us and a source of pride to our family.

RESHIMOS NO. 130

ENTRY FOR SHABBOS BEREISHIS, 27 TISHREI, 5702

The meaning of the names Shmuel and Pinchas. /

Three questions answered by three Bar Mitzvahs.

Bar Mitzvah (of Shmuel Pinchas Halevi Eber) Shabbos Parshas Bereishis 27 Tishrei, 5702.

The name of the Bar Mitzvah is Shmuel Pinchas. The Baal Shem Tov said¹⁶¹ that one must learn a lesson in *avodas Hashem* from everything that one sees and hears. This is certainly the case regarding a name, for it is stated in many holy books¹⁶² that parents are Divinely inspired in their choice of a name for the child, and the life-energy is drawn from the soul to the body through the name.¹⁶³

A person's name also reflects his *avodah*, as we find in the case of Yehoshua, of whom it is said, י"ה יושיעך מעצת מרגלים — “may *Hashem* save you from the counsel of the spies,”¹⁶⁴ and

160. *Ibid.* 30.

161. See *HaTamim*, Vol. 8, p. 47; *Igros Kodesh* of the Previous Rebbe, Vol. III, p. 289, *HaYom Yom*, entry for 9 Iyar.

162. See *Shaar HaGilgulim* intro. 23; *Shaar Maamarei Razal* (end); *Emek HaMelech* 1:4 (end).

163. See *Likkutei Torah, Behar*, p. 41c.

164. *Sotah* 34b.

reflects his character, as we find in the case of Rabbi Meir, who could tell the character of a person by his name.¹⁶⁵

The name of this Bar Mitzvah is Shmuel Pinchas.

The source for the name Shmuel is, “I requested him from Hashem”¹⁶⁶ — the word Shmuel having its root in the word *sh’elah* “request.” *Sh’elah* also has the connotation, “borrowed.” Therefore, the verse may also be translated as “borrowed from Hashem.” An object that is borrowed must be returned to its owner in its original state.¹⁶⁷ The borrower only has permission to use the borrowed item for its conventional purpose.

The implication for one’s service of G-d is the following: G-d does not make unreasonable demands of His creatures¹⁶⁸ for “according to the camel is the load.”¹⁶⁹ Therefore, in order to allow him to be victorious in the battle with the body and the animal soul, the G-dly soul — with all its inherent powers which will allow it to be victorious — is “lent” to a person.

This is what the Sages mean when they say,¹⁷⁰ “*Mashbi’im*” — (that the G-dly soul is made to take an oath that, when it descends into the body, it will be righteous), and this has two meanings; a) the expression of a “*shvuah*” (oath), the oath penetrating to and arousing the quintessential point of Jewishness¹⁷¹ [this being the reason why (after much debate¹⁷² among the Sages) it was decided that one who is doubted in fiscal matters is not doubted when taking an oath¹⁷³], b) being an expression of “*sova*” (being satiated) — that the soul is satiated with the power necessary to fulfil its mission. In fact, both senses correspond: since G-d does not make unreasonable demands of His creatures, if He requires that the soul take an

165. *Yoma* 83b — when R. Meir heard that a man was called Kidor, he understood from the name that this was a wicked man, basing himself on the verse — *Haazinu* 32:20 *Ki Dor Tahapuchos* — for they are a generation of reversals. See also *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. I, p. 288.

166. *I Shmuel* 1:20.

167. See beginning of *Avodah Zarah*, *Rashi*, *ibid*.

168. *Avodah Zarah* 3a.

169. *Kesubos* 67a.

170. See *Tanya*, Ch. 1.

171. See *Reshimah*, *Shnayim Ochazin B’Tallis*, p. 11.

172. *Ibid.*, p. 39.

173. *Bava Metzia* 5b.

oath to be righteous, He must also give the ability to fulfil the oath.

It is necessary at all times for a person to remember that his G-dly soul and its powers are only leased to him, and that the soul must be returned intact, as the Sages say¹⁷⁴ “Would that a person’s exit from the world resemble his coming into the world.” This is also the meaning of Chanah’s words,¹⁷⁵ “and also I lent him to G-d.”

Now, a borrower is liable for all types of damages,¹⁷⁶ even those caused by accidents, except in the case where “an animal dies in the normal course of working” in which case the borrower is exempt.¹⁷⁷ In *avodas Hashem* this refers to self-sacrifice, a type of *avodah* where a person would even “die,” that is, give up his soul in order to gain victory over the body. However — who could possibly survive in such circumstances — where he is liable for all the damage done to the G-dly soul?

There is, however, one other situation in which a borrower is exempt — and this is the advice to be given to the borrower — and that is, that the borrowing should only be undertaken with the owner present. As the Talmud¹⁷⁸ states, “If one who wants to borrow something from his friend and (at the same time be exempted from all liability should say to the friend before actually taking possession of the item, “Give me some water to drink,” for this is also a case of borrowing with the owner in the borrower’s service — for which he is exempt. This exemption is on condition that that the involvement of the owner must be at the time of borrowing and not at the time of the accident.”¹⁷⁹

In *avodas Hashem*, this means that the borrowing of the G-dly soul must be “with the owner in service at the time of borrowing,” that is, the owner must request — in prayer —

174. *Ibid.*, 107a.

175. *I Shmuel* 1:28.

176. *Shavuos* 49a.

177. *Bava Metzia* 96b.

178. *Ibid.*, 97a.

179. *Ibid.*, 95b — if the owner was with the borrower that is, was in his service at the time of borrowing, he need not be with the borrower at the time the animal suffered a broken limb or died for the borrower to receive this exemption. It is sufficient that they were together when the cow was lent.

water to drink — bodily needs at the time of borrowing — and not later — at the time of the accident.

This is the reason why the Sages prohibited eating before prayer¹⁸⁰ and it is also prohibited to attend to one's business before prayer,¹⁸¹ rather one should pray immediately upon rising from bed,¹⁸² even before learning Torah.¹⁸³

If a person would start using his daily borrowed G-dly soul before prayer — which is the time for requesting his needs (from the owner), the fact that the owner is with him afterwards will not help — for the owner was not there at the time of borrowing. However if he prayed immediately upon rising, then the borrowing of the G-dly soul took place at a time when the owner was present — during prayer — in such circumstances the *halachah* for all guardians is that if the owner is present at the time of borrowing, the guardian is exempt, even for neglect.¹⁸⁴

And this is the meaning of the verse in *Shmuel* that “All his days he was on loan to the L-rd,”¹⁸⁵ and everywhere he went he had his own four cubits, as the Sages say, commenting on the verse¹⁸⁶ “for there was his house” — that wherever he went his house went with him.¹⁸⁷

One can draw another lesson from the name Pinchas.

The way of serving *Hashem*, particularly in our times, must be in the manner of Pinchas, who demonstrated self-sacrifice. He was not afraid of the men of the tribe of Shimon, from whom he was only saved by a miracle.¹⁸⁸ Had Pinchas consulted the courts, they would not have ruled that he kill Zimri. Furthermore, had Zimri first separated and Pinchas

180. *Berachos* 10b.

181. *Ibid.* 14a.

182. *Ibid.* 5b.

183. See *Rashi, ibid.* And even according to *Tosafos* who permits learning before prayer, there is an advantage of learning after prayer over that learning before prayer — see *Likkutei Torah, VeZos HaBerachah*, p. 96b.

184. See *Rambam Laws of Secirus* 1:3.

185. That is, *Shmuel* constantly had *Hashem* with him in prayer — at the time of borrowing.

186. *I Shmuel* 7:17.

187. *Berachos* 10b.

188. *Sanhedrin* 82b.

subsequently killed him, Pinchas would have been liable for capital punishment.¹⁸⁹ Even so, Pinchas demonstrated self-sacrifice, not only for his own benefit but to save others, and in the case of Pinchas — all Israel.

In addition to the lesson to be learned from the name of the Bar Mitzvah, there is a lesson to be learned from the fact that one gathers to celebrate a Bar Mitzvah, an occasion on which yet another Jew accepts upon himself the yoke of Torah and *mitzvos*.

By way of introduction:

Although in regard to all epochs the Sages¹⁹⁰ say that Israel is persecuted and oppressed, and although they are particularly so at this time,¹⁹¹ nonetheless, the Sages have also said¹⁹² “The actions of the Fathers are a sign to the children,” that if we look into the past we can be strong in our faith in a brilliant future.

We find the very first Bar Mitzvah was made by the first Jew Avraham, *Ha-Ivri*,¹⁹³ on the day when Yitzchak was weaned from the evil inclination over to the good inclination¹⁹⁴ that is, the day of his Bar Mitzvah. It is from this event that we derive an answer to the main question posed by the nations of the world — how does it come about that Israel, the smallest nation both in power and quantity,¹⁹⁵ can rise to such heights, being so small?¹⁹⁶ This is exactly the question that Og the giant put at the Bar Mitzvah of Yitzchak. Yet, in the end, it was he who fell, (even physically), to the offspring of Yitzchak.¹⁹⁷

A second question, not asked by the nations of the world, is asked among Jews themselves — why should a Jew be G-d-fearing, sitting in the tents of study? Surely, one must be adaptable and be able to mingle with others?

189. *Ibid.*

190. *Yevamos* 47a.

191. This *Reshimah* was written at the height of the Holocaust.

192. See *Tanchuma, Lech Lecha* 9; *Bereishis Rabbah* 40:6; *Ramban, Lech Lecha* 12:6.

193. See *Lech Lecha* 14:13; *Bereishis Rabbah* 42:8 — the entire world being on one side and Avraham on the other.

194. *Bereishis Rabbah* 53:10 on the verse in *Vayeira* 21:8.

195. *Vaes'chanan* 7:7.

196. See *Amos* 7:2-5.

197. *Bereishis Rabbah, ibid.*; see *Reshimos* No. 17.

The answer to this lies in the second Bar Mitzvah hinted at in the Torah. “And the boys grew up (that is, became Bar Mitzvah) and Esav became a hunter”¹⁹⁸ — he hunted the creatures with his mouth¹⁹⁹ — and his end was to fall to the sword of the sons of Yaakov.²⁰⁰

A third question — surely it is enough that one should save oneself. Why should one make efforts on behalf of another, either in this world or the next?

The answer to this lies in the third Bar Mitzvah mentioned in the Torah. “And each man, Shimon and Levi, took his sword,”²⁰¹ and we have a tradition that at that time they were thirteen years old²⁰² — their souls incensed, as conveyed by their question, “should our sister be made like a harlot,”²⁰³ even though Shchem had promised them and her everything good materially.

From these three Bar Mitzvahs we have the answers to these three questions. Only the way of Torah and *mitzvos* is the correct way.

* * *

Bar Mitzvah of Shaul Alexander Bistritzky, 23-25 Iyar 5703.

We are gathered to celebrate a Bar Mitzvah, an occasion on which another member has joined the ranks of Israel accepting upon himself the yoke of Torah and *mitzvos*.

About the Jewish people, it is stated, “One nation in the land.”²⁰⁴ that is, at all times and places they are one unit, and the *simchah* of an individual, and particularly a *simchah* connected with Torah and *mitzvos* is a *simchah* of the entire people and it affects them all.

On a broader scale, the unity of the people reflects itself in all phases of time, past, present and future. Conversely, because

198. *Toldos* 26:27.

199. *Bereishis Rabbah* 63:10.

200. See *Yalkut Shimoni, Vayechi* (end), that Esav was killed by Yehudah, and others say by Chushim the son of Dan.

201. *Vayishlach* 34:25.

202. *Rashi, Nazir* 29b.

203. *Vayishlach ibid.* 31.

204. *II Shmuel* 7:23; see *Tanya, Iggeres HaKodesh*, Epistle 9.

the *simchah* of an individual affects the entire nation, an individual cannot make do with a selfish mode of *avodah*, rather he must be prepared, even to the point of self-sacrifice to help another. This is also a true reflection of his own perfection.

This is hinted at by the fact that our source for Bar Mitzvah is the action of the sons of Yaakov, Shimon and Levi being thirteen when they fell on Shchem — from which we may learn that, from the time of Bar Mitzvah, a Jew must be willing to practice self-sacrifice for the sake of another.



Chapter 8

LETTERS FROM THE REBBE

The Rebbe penned volumes of letters of his blessings to Bar Mitzvah celebrations. Every Bar Mitzvah boy that requested the Rebbe's blessing was sent a letter with a standard text, and the Rebbe often used to add an additional message in his handwriting or as a postscript. Of particular note were the many letters he addressed to war orphans of the Israeli Defense Forces whose fathers had fallen in battle, and for whom a public Bar Mitzvah was celebrated in Kfar Chabad.

Presented here is a brief selection of letters written by the Rebbe in English.

1.

B"H
10 Kislev, 5740
Brooklyn

Greetings and blessings,

In response to your informing me of your reaching the age of *mitzvos*,

May it be the will of *Hashem* that you should grow from the age of 13 for *mitzvos* to the age of 15 etc., as in the ruling of the *Mishnah (Avos Ch. 5)*, and you should increase with great diligence your study of Torah, both *Toras HaNigleh* and *Toras HaChassidus* and you should keep the *mitzvos* in a beautiful manner, and *Hashem* should grant you success to be a *Chassid*, G-d fearing and a *Lamdan*.

With blessing
(Signature)

P. S. The following is written in English so that if you wish you may show it to your friends, in the spirit of the *mitzvah* of

“Love your fellow as yourself”, which if in all matters one needs to help another, how much more so in matters of *Yiddishkeit*, Torah and *Mitzvos*.

At first glance, it is strange that the day of the Bar Mitzvah, which is so important that the *Zohar* declares that for the Bar Mitzvah boy it is almost like the Day of *Mattan Torah*, when Jews first received the Torah and *mitzvos*, yet insofar as *Tachanun* is concerned, which is omitted even on the so-called “Minor Holidays,” if the Bar Mitzvah does not occur on *Shabbos* or *Yom Tov* (or any other day that *Tachanun* is not said) — *Tachanun* is said by the Bar Mitzvah boy, as on any *ordinary* weekday.

One of the explanations is as follows:

When one considers that human capacities are limited in general, especially the capacities of a boy at the start of the fourteenth year, yet he still has to assume *all* the duties and responsibilities of a full-fledged Jew, and, moreover, fulfill them with joy, in keeping with the rule: Serve G-d with joy — the question begs itself: How is he going to carry out all that is expected of him? Especially, being a member of a people which is a small minority among the nations of the world; and even in this country, where one has every opportunity to carry out all religious duties, most people are more interested and engaged in the material aspects of life?

The answer is that the Torah and *mitzvos* have been given by G-d, the Creator of the world, and of man, and He knows all the difficulties that a Jew may encounter. G-d has surely provided every Jew with the necessary strength to overcome any and all difficulties to live up to His Will, for G-d would not expect someone to do something that is beyond his capacity.

If however, there should be a moment of weakness, when carrying out G-d’s Will is not in the fullest measure of perfection, G-d in His infinite goodness, makes it possible to “say *Tachanun*” — to do *teshuvah*. Indeed, as the Alter Rebbe explains, *teshuvah* is basically for lack of perfection in *avodas Hashem*.

Therefore, on the first day of becoming a full-fledged Jew, and after fulfilling the very first *mitzvah*, namely, *Shema*, by which a Jew declares his total commitment to G-d and

obedience to all His commandments, the Bar Mitzvah boy does say *Tachanun* the following morning and afternoon (provided it is not *Shabbos* or *Yom Tov*, etc.), for the essence of *Tachanun* is *teshuvah*, and there is the assurance that “Nothing stands in the way of *teshuvah*.”

This knowledge will, moreover, also stand him in good stead when he will involve himself in the great *mitzvah* of *v’ohavto lre’acho komoicho*, to bring the alienated closer to *Yiddishkeit*. For remembering the rule that “nothing stands in the way of *teshuvah*,” he will eagerly and compassionately apply it to them, especially as, with most cases, the failure to observe fully the Torah and *mitzvos* is due to extenuating circumstances.

With all the above in mind, and being fortunate in growing up in a family where *Yiddishkeit* is a living experience in the everyday life, you will start out on your life as a full-fledged Jew with confidence, and will proceed from strength to strength, and be a source of true pride and joy to your dear parents and family, and to all our Jewish people.

2.

By the Grace of G-d
6 Teves, 5719
Brooklyn, N. Y.

Greetings and blessings:

I was pleased to receive your letter informing me of your forthcoming celebration on the 16th of Teves.

I send you my blessing that you should grow up into a fine Jew, which means one who lives his life in accordance with our holy Torah, observing the *mitzvos*. This road is full of light, but it should be further illuminated by the teachings of *Chassidism*, which reveal the richness and abundance of the light of our faith, our Torah and *mitzvos*.

Bar-Mitzvah is a festival, marking the time when a Jewish boy becomes a fully qualified member of our holy nation. It is a great and important day for him. Yet it is not like the other festivals, when either no work is permitted at all, or, if it is, then in a smaller measure. On the day of Bar Mitzvah (if it does not

occur on *Shabbos*) work is permitted, and *Tachanun* is said in prayer.

There is a lesson in this for the Bar Mitzvah boy; that although the Bar Mitzvah is a great and joyful event, it also places upon him all the duties, responsibilities and privileges that belong to a fully qualified Jew. Such an event cannot be celebrated by a stoppage of work. On the contrary, it calls for increased efforts immediately, showing that the Bar Mitzvah boy has become an active member of our people, according to the requirements of our holy Torah.

But in the course of work, especially in the beginning, it is possible to make mistakes without knowing about them. That is why the Bar Mitzvah says *Tachanun* on this day, even though it is his festival. For *Tachanun* is a confession of the mistakes which he may have made, and a prayer for forgiveness, together with a resolution never to repeat them again. It is a resolution to be better, purer and holier, that is, to be worthier of the name "Jew" in the fullest sense of the word.

I will be glad to receive a letter from you about your progress in studies and I wish you much success in them. With the blessing of *Mazal tov* to you and all the family.

(Signature)



Chapter 9

THE BAR MITZVAH OF THE REBBEIM

THE BAAL SHEM TOV

The following story¹ tells of the source of the Holy Baal Shem Tov's soul, and one may learn a profound lesson from this story, namely, how great is the Bar Mitzvah day, and how great is the attribute of *tznius* (modesty).

On one occasion, Rabbi Adam Baal Shem — the third leader of the group of hidden *tzaddikim* — revealed to the Baal Shem Tov, the source of his holy soul.

In the year 5333, there lived a simple Jew in the holy city of *Tzfas* in *Eretz Yisrael*. This Jew knew how to pray, and was simple and modest.

One night, after he had finished saying *Tikkun Chatzos*, he heard a knock on his door. He asked who was there and the man answered "*Eliyahu HaNovi*." The man opened the door, and *Eliyahu HaNovi* entered, the room becoming illuminated with light and joy.

Eliyahu HaNovi turned to the man and said, "I have come to reveal to you the year in which *Mashiach* will come. However, I will only reveal this to you on the condition that you will reveal to me what you did on the day of your Bar Mitzvah. It is in the great merit of what you did on the day of your Bar Mitzvah that it was ruled in the Heavenly Court that I should come to you and reveal to you such secrets."

The simple Jew from *Tzfas* replied, "That which I did, I did only in the honor of *Hashem* — how can I therefore reveal it to others? If you will not reveal to me these secrets, so be it, but I

1. Printed in *HaTamim*, Vol. I, p. 12.

know that what has been done in the honor of *Hashem* must remain a secret, and I will not share it with you.”

Immediately, *Eliyahu HaNovi* disappeared and returned to heaven. A heavenly storm had been created by the simple yet profound answer of this Jew: that he was prepared to forego such secrets in order to preserve the secrecy of what he did on his Bar Mitzvah day in the honor of *Hashem*. The Heavenly Court finally ruled that *Eliyahu HaNovi* should again appear to the man and teach him Torah and reveal to him secrets of the Torah. In time the man became unique in his generation, a perfect *tzaddik*, but so modest that nobody knew of his greatness.

The time came, and that man passed away. The Heavenly Court discussed his case, and finally decided that his reward would be to again descend to this world, where he would be forced to reveal his greatness, and he would initiate a new path in the service of *Hashem*, infusing the world with holiness and purity and paving the way for the coming of *Mashiach*.

This holy soul was the soul of the Baal Shem Tov.

THE ALTER REBBE

When the Alter Rebbe became Bar Mitzvah he was accepted into the *Chevra Kadisha*² and his name was entered into the communal ledger, prefaced with great titles such as “*Tanna U’Palig*.”³

The Tzemach Tzedek once spoke about this title that was conferred on the Alter Rebbe and said; “The *Aruch*⁴ quotes the saying, “*Rav* is a *Tanna U’Palig*” and refers to three occasions when *Rav* is called a *Tanna*. 1) In *Berachos* 49a, in the subject of admission; 2) *Shabbos* 135b in the subject of circumcision and immersion; 3) *Kesubbos* 81a. He then continued to explain each subject in *avodah*. When his words were later repeated to the

2. The Burial Society.

3. Meaning he has the status of one of the *Tannaim* of the *Mishnah*, who has the legal right to challenge and argue with *Tannaitic* statements. See *Sefer HaToldos Admur HaZakein*, p. 77-78.

4. Entry *Rav* — in the name of *Hai Gaon*. See other sources in *Yalkut Bar Mitzvah*, p. 87 footnote 2.

Alter Rebbe, the Alter Rebbe responded, “*Boruch Hashem* I am hearing this, the education has succeeded.”⁵

On the occasion of the Alter Rebbe’s Bar Mitzvah in the year 5518, many *Geonim* and *Lamdanim* from the areas of Vitebsk, Polotzk and Minsk participated. It was like a meeting of the great *Sanhedrin*. Amongst those gathered, were three most distinguished guests; The Alter Rebbe’s uncle (his father’s brother-in-law) the *gaon* Reb Yosef Yitzchak, who was well known throughout the entire region as the *ilui* from Tsharei (and with whom the Alter Rebbe was especially close and friendly). The *gaon* Reb Moshe Reuven, the son of the great *gaon* Reb Avrohom Zev of Beshenkovitch, who succeeded his father in running the *Yeshivah Gedolah* in Beshenkovitch; and the *gaon* Reb Avrohom Meir, the most distinguished student of the *Baal Seder HaDoros*.”

The entire week of the Bar Mitzvah, the Alter Rebbe’s father, Reb Boruch, and his grandfather, Reb Moshe, celebrated, there being every day a *seudas mitzvah* graced with many *chiddushei Torah*. However the *chiddushei Torah* of the Alter Rebbe surpassed them all. All the *geonim* present gave him ordination and conferred upon him the title “Rav”. It was this title that was written in the ledger of the *Chevra Kadisha* as a remembrance for all generations.⁶

The Alter Rebbe maintained a responsa correspondence with all the *geonim* who attended the Bar Mitzvah. The *chassid* and *gaon* Reb Yitzchak Aizik, the *Av Beis Din* of Vitebsk, related that he possessed three volumes of handwritten responsa (which had been copied from the handwritten copy of Reb Yehuda Leib (the Maharil) the brother of the Alter Rebbe — responses to questions posed to the Alter Rebbe by those who attended his Bar Mitzvah.⁷

5. *Sefer HaSichos 5700*, p. 175.

6. *Sefer HaSichos 5700*, p. 58.

7. *Ibid.* p. 78.

THE MITTELER REBBE

When the Mitteler Rebbe was young, he had a *melamed* who learned constantly with him, only taking a break to go home to his family for the festivals. Before he traveled home for the festivals he always went to see the Alter Rebbe, who would request that he return after the holiday.

On the eve of Rosh Hashanah, 5547, as was his custom, before he left for home, he went to see the Alter Rebbe, but was quite surprised when the Alter Rebbe did not request that he return after the festival. After the festival, he was undecided whether or not to return, but in the end he decided to return, whatever the consequence might be. When he returned to Liozna, he entered the room of the Mitteler Rebbe, and upon engaging him in a Torah discussion found that he could not fathom the depths of the Mitteler Rebbe's learning and that he was on a much higher level than when he left him in the previous year.

He asked the Mitteler Rebbe why this was so, and the Mitteler Rebbe replied that during the month of Tishrei he had begun to lay tefillin. Before he began, his father the Alter Rebbe blessed him that putting on the tefillin *shel yad* should have an effect of opening up his heart, and putting on the tefillin *shel rosh*, of opening up his mind. From that moment on, a major change had occurred.⁸

The following account of the Mitteler Rebbe's Bar Mitzvah is given in *Likkutei Dibburim*.⁹ It is in fact a narration of R. Pinchas of Shklov to R. Nachum:

That year, in honor of the Bar Mitzvah of his son, the Rebbe (the Alter Rebbe) had permitted *chassidim* to visit Liozna for this Shabbos, which would have otherwise been forbidden by the Liozna regulations.

Twice on each of the following three *Shabbosos*, the Rebbe publicly expounded *Chassidus* — on *Parshas Chayei Sarah* and *Toldos*, before the Bar Mitzvah, and on *Parshas Vayetze*, after the Bar Mitzvah.

8. *Sefer Migdal Oz* p. 185.

9. Vol. II, p. 193ff., in the English edition of Kehot.

On Thursday morning, candles were lit in the big *Beis HaMidrash* in the courtyard, and *Shacharis* began at daybreak. Three wooden walls with windows and a roof of boards had been added to the *Beis HaMidrash*, in order to accommodate the *chassidim* who had come from out of town.

The Rebbe went up the steps of the *bimah*, and read the Torah himself. After a *Kohen* and a *Levi* had been called up to the reading, the Rebbe was called upon, and at the conclusion of his *aliyah* he recited the blessing of *Boruch... sheptarani*, complete with the name of G-d.

Immediately after *Shacharis* the Rebbe expounded the verse, “*Ki Lekach Tov Nosati Lochem Torosi Al Taazovu* — For I have given you a goodly teaching; do not forsake My Torah.”

He began by pointing out that in the usage of the Sages, both *Lekach* (teaching) and *Tov* (goodly) signify Torah; why, then, does the verse seemingly repeat itself by adding the word “*Torosi*” (My Torah), in the phrase, “Do not forsake My Torah?”

In order to answer this question, the Rebbe explained that *Lekach* represents the revealed levels of the Torah — that is, its laws, which stem from G-d’s wisdom. In this spirit, as a synonym for *Lekach*, *Rashi* gives *Limud* (learning). This word is etymologically related to *Malmad Habakar* (the goad of an ox), for the laws of the Torah must be fulfilled by accepting the yoke of heaven. This is Divine Wisdom — and, indeed, the Targum translates *Lekach* by the Aramaic word *Madaa* (wisdom).

As for the other word, the Rebbe explained that *Tov* represents the innermost levels of the Torah, the unfathomable mysteries underlying each law.

This then, explains the *Lekach Tov*, — the twofold “goodly teaching.”

As to the question: what is added by the word *Torosi*, the Rebbe pointed out that “the Torah was given as a gift,” as in the phrase *Mattan Torah* — the “Giving of the Torah.” And this Torah which we are told not to forsake, is referred to (in the second half of our verse) as *Torosi* — “My Torah,” the Torah of the very essence of the Infinite One, Blessed be He. Likewise, it is this quality in the Torah that the Sages refer to in their

teaching, “*Osi atem lokchim*” — “It is Me whom you are taking.”

Having completed his exposition, the Rebbe then told his son, the Bar Mitzvah, to deliver the discourse which he had told him to prepare.

The Bar Mitzvah thereupon began to expound the verse, “He tells His words to Yaakov, His statutes and ordinances to Yisrael.”

He first explained the statement of the *Midrash*: “It has five names — *nefesh, ruach, neshamah, chayah and yechidah*.” These five levels of the soul divide into two brackets — *Naran* (an acrostic for the first three levels) refers to the indwelling *oros* (“lights”) invested in *keilim* (“vessels”); *Chai* (an acrostic for the two highest letters) refers to *oros makkifim* (“encompassing lights”).

He went on to explain that the two alternative names, Yaakov and Yisrael, allude to two diverse approaches in divine service.

The former name (Yaakov) comprises the letter *yud* and the word *okaiv* (lit., “heel”). This means that the *yud* of the Four-Letter Divine Name as found in the soul — that is, the indomitable quality of souls, the innate resoluteness of the soul, and the Essence of *Ein Sof* — irradiates in the *eikev* [that is, the lowliest levels within the Jewish people], in other words, in simple folk. In them too the *yud* of the Four-Letter Name in the soul shines forth, by virtue of the letters of Torah and prayer that they utter with simple faith. Even though they do not know the meaning of these words, this *yud* sheds light within such folk nonetheless — because the comprehensive intention motivating their words is that they should be uttered for the sake of heaven.

The second name (Yisrael) echoes the words, *Yisar Eil* (lit., “G-d prevails [within their souls]”). This alludes to “intellectuals,” whose Divine service lies in the direction of mind and heart, through meditation and comprehension.

[Having compared the terms “Yaakov” and “Yisrael,” the Mittlerer Rebbe now turns to another pair of contrasting words in the verse, as follows:] The term *Mishpatav* (“His ordinances”) signifies the commandments that may be grasped by mortal

intellect; the term *Chukav* (“His statutes”) signifies those commandments that transcend mortal intellect. Our verse teaches that one’s observance of the former category of *mitzvos* should be prompted by an acceptance of the yoke of heaven — simply because G-d is the one who prescribed the *mitzvah* — just as is the case with the latter category of *mitzvos*, namely, the *chukim*.

As to the verb (*Maggid*) which opens our verse [and serves both of its clauses], it suggests “drawing forth,” or “progression”, since it may be seen as being cognate with the first verb in the phrase, *Nehar... Naged VeNafek* — “A river... flows and goes forth.”

[To sum up: *Magid Devarav LeYaakov Chukav U'Mishpatav LeYisrael* (lit., “He tells His words to Yaakov, His statutes and ordinances to Yisrael”), these are the words of the verse. The latter phrase, which relates to *avodah* at the level of “Yisrael,” may now be understood as follows:] the quintessential statutes (*chukim*) and ordinances (*mishpatim*) of the Essence of the *Ein Sof* are drawn forth into one’s *avodah* in mind and heart, so that the *mishpatim* are observed out of the same unconditional acceptance of the yoke of heaven as are the *chukim*.

[Likewise, the opening phrase of the verse, which relates to *avodah* at the level of “Yaakov”, may now be understood thus:] the quintessential words (*Devarim*) of the Essence of the *Ein Sof* are drawn forth into that kind of *avodah* that consists of reciting the letters of Torah and prayer out of simple faith.

As soon as the [Alter] Rebbe’s son had completed this discourse [R. Pinchas of Shklov here resumes his account of the Mittlerer Rebbe’s Bar-Mitzvah], the Rebbe was most joyful, and for quite some time entered a state of *dveikus*. A hushed silence reigned in the big shul in the courtyard, and in its newly-opened extension. All eyes focused on the raised *Bimah* where the Rebbe and the Bar Mitzvah stood, together with the Rebbe’s brothers.

Finally, the Rebbe quoted the statement of our Sages: “He who cites a teaching in the name of him who first taught it, should think of that teacher as standing before him (at that very moment).”

And with that he began to intone his *niggun*, the *niggun* whose four themes parallel the letters of the Four-Letter Name of G-d, and the Four Worlds — *Atzilus*, *Beriah*, *Yetzirah* and *Asiyah*. The Rebbe sang each theme twice, except for the fourth, which he sang several times.

As he sang, all the people assembled in the big *beis midrash* and in the adjoining hall were bound to his singing with all their thoughts, with all their spiritual faculties, and with all their senses. With each theme that the Rebbe sang, another facet of the soul was awakened. That *niggun* raised up every individual — one higher, one lower — from his accustomed spiritual plateau. In fact R. Yosef Kol-Bo and R. Issur Kisess told me that, as the Rebbe sang, they recalled everything that had taken place within them from the day when they began to become thinking individuals.

Having come to the end of his melody, the Rebbe said: “When I was in Mezritch, I heard from the Rebbe, in the name of my grandfather, that honey-cake made of cornflour causes one’s heart to be drawn towards the Torah, because the spiritual roots of grain and of honey are vessels for containing the Torah.”

The Rebbe took a piece of honey-cake and pronounced the blessing of *mezonos*, and a little glass of *mashke*, over which he pronounced the blessing of *shehakol* and said *LeChaim*. Everyone was then given some *lekach* and whiskey, and there was an atmosphere of joy.

After *Maariv* there was a festive meal at which the Rebbe delivered a number of chassidic discourses and the chassidim embarked on a *farbrengen* that lasted the whole night. This was the Rebbe’s first Bar-Mitzvah celebration.

Three times in the course of that Shabbos, *Parshas Vayeitzei*, the Rebbe expounded Torah publicly — before *Kabbalas Shabbos*, on *Shabbos* at the daytime *kiddush*, and after *Minchah* and the *Shabbos* meal. Both the *Kiddush* and the *Shabbos* meal were held in the big *shul* in the courtyard.

At *Minchah* that day, the Rebbe read the Torah himself, and said that the third *aliyah* should be given to his son, the Bar-Mitzvah.

All those who were present when the Bar-Mitzvah was called to the Torah, who saw the Rebbe's *dveikus* when his son pronounced the blessings, and who heard the Reading of the Torah, — all of them to a man must have been overawed when they heard how the Rebbe read that brief passage of four verses: *Vayomer Yaakov, koton-tee, hatzilainee, veAtah amarta.*

The Rebbe was always insistent on grammatical precision, and meticulous about the traditional melody for the Torah Reading. Though he followed the Ashkenazi pronunciation, he nevertheless distinguished between *alef* and *ayin* and between *ches* and *chof*, as is in the case in the Sefardi accent. And though he intoned that day's portion exactly according to the prescribed cantillation, each of its four verses nevertheless echoed the melodic line of one of the four themes of the well-known *niggun*.

The eminent scholars who were present were engrossed in learned speculation as to why the Rebbe had deferred the calling of the the Bar Mitzvah to the Torah from Thursday to Shabbos. Their discussion took into account the *halachic* definition of *Ish* (man), which begins at the age of thirteen years and one day, whereas on the day of one's Bar Mitzvah one reaches the age of thirteen years (exactly), and they also considered the rule that "Part of the day counts for the whole day. The arguments that they raised were all reasonable — but no one was able to explain why the *aliyah* should have taken place at *Minchah* instead of at *Shacharis*.

The Rebbe's younger son, R. Chaim Avraham, was a child of six or seven at the time. He would often walk into the little *Beis HaMidrash* in the courtyard, because he liked listening to what *chassidim* had to tell. He was a child of serious temperament, and had no time for mischief.

When he walked in soon after the Bar Mitzvah, he found a number of *chassidim* there, including R. Yitzchak of Yanovitch — a particular favorite of his, because he was such a gifted storyteller. They asked the little boy whether he had perhaps heard an explanation as to why the Rebbe had said that the Bar Mitzvah should be called to the Torah at *Minchah* on Shabbos instead of in the morning.

R. Chaim Avraham told them that on Friday night his father had learned *Zohar* with the Bar Mitzvah.

“I didn’t understand a word,” he confessed, “but my brother understood it thoroughly.”

“When they finished learning, my father told my brother that his *Zeide* (the Baal Shem Tov) had told his Rebbe (the Maggid of Mezritch) that one should endeavor to arrange the first *aliyah* of a Bar Mitzvah for the reading of the Torah on Monday or Thursday morning, or at *Minchah* on Shabbos.

The little boy went on to relay what his elder brother had later explained him: “*Zaide* said that the Torah reading of Mondays and Thursdays is an auspicious time Above, in the same way as all of *Minchah* time of *Shabbos*, and the Torah reading at *Minchah* time on *Shabbos*, is the pinnacle of the most sublime moment of Divine gratification.

“I understood nothing of what my father was telling my brother. My heart ached so badly that I started to cry. My brother told my father that I was crying, and my father called me over and asked me why. So I cried even more, and told him that I hadn’t understood a word of what he had been explaining to my brother. My father told me to finish with my tears, and then he would explain it all to me. I stopped crying, and my father said: “Berl asked my why he was to be called to the Torah at *Minchah* on Shabbos instead of at *Shacharis*; so I answered him, “Because at *Minchah* on Shabbos we say, “May my prayer to You, G-d, be at a propitious time.”

“Then I asked my father; “But, surely, whenever a person *davens* is a good time! Why especially *Minchah* time?”

“My father said, “There is a certain time every day during which a king listens to the requests of those who come to see him. There are people who are close to the king, and they know which are the best times to approach him, and those who know such a person ask him to submit their request to the king at a good time. Now, until one is thirteen years old, one is free of sin. At thirteen, one becomes Bar Mitzvah, and the Good Inclination appears. This *Yetzer Tov* is one of those who are close to the King of kings, the Holy One Blessed be He, and it comes from Him as an emissary — to remind the person to observe the *mitzvos* and to do good deeds. And that is why a Bar

Mitzvah is called to the Torah for the first time at the auspicious hour of *Minchah*.”¹⁰

THE REBBE THE TZEMACH TZEDEK

The Tzemach Tzedek related to his son, the Rebbe Maharash, that at the time of his Bar Mitzvah the Alter Rebbe told him: “One should learn *Torah Lishmah*. As a preparation for this, one should be clear in *Shas Bavli, Yerushalmi, Tosefta, Sifra, and Sifri* in the same measure as the *Rambam* was fluent in them.

Until the age of Bar Mitzvah, his main area of study was in *nigleh*, but after the Bar Mitzvah, the Alter Rebbe fixed times to learn with him *Kabbalah* and *Chassidus*.¹¹

THE REBBE MAHARASH

“I was very diligent in learning *Mishnayos* by heart — for I was already fluent in five of the *Sedarim* and in a few *Mesechtos* in *Seder Taharos* — for my father (the Rebbe the Tzemach Tzedek) had told me that by the time of my Bar Mitzvah I was to know by heart and be able to say clearly all Six Orders of the *Mishnah*, the entire *Tanach* and *Tanya*.

The night before my Bar Mitzvah I slept for two hours in the room of the Tzemach Tzedek, and it was then that the event that I told you about happened — said the Maharash to his son the Rebbe Rashab — also the *gartel* was put on before *tefillah* and he said, “*Chogro B'Oz Mosneha*”, and a short *Maamar* on the subject of “*Chagor Charbecha Al Yarech Gibor*.” The *Tefillah B'Tzibbur* was davened with tremendous *simchah*, many *chassidim* came, there was a large *seudah*, and the Rebbe said *chassidus* three times.”¹²

10. *Likkutei Dibburim* (English edition — Kehot), Vol. II, p. 193-201.

11. *Sefer Toldos Tzemach Tzedek*, p. 61.

12. *Sefer Toldos Maharash*, p. 32-33.

THE REBBE RASHAB¹³

Already by the age of Bar Mitzvah, the Rebbe Rashab had a phenomenal knowledge of many areas of the Torah. He knew; *Chumash* with *Rashi*, *Nach* and five orders of the *Mishnah* thoroughly. This was in addition to much Talmud and clarity in *Shluchan Aruch*, particularly in the section of *Orach Chaim*.¹⁴

The Previous Rebbe related that his father learned the whole of the section *Orach Chaim* thoroughly and that he had, moreover, trained his body to act in accordance with the *din*.¹⁵ By the age of Bar Mitzvah, his limbs only moved in accordance with the *halachah*. His learning schedule was closely supervised by the Rebbe Maharash.¹⁶

Even as a young child the Rebbe Rashab was very orderly and he invested much energy and effort into translating what he had learned, be it in *Shulchan Aruch* or in *Chassidus*, into actual *avodah*.¹⁷ His father, the Rebbe Maharash, related: “My son, Rashab, was never childish. Even at a very young age, he was G-d fearing, orderly and diligent. He worked hard to ensure that he conducted himself in the ways of *Chassidus*. By the time of his Bar Mitzvah, he was already a *chassid*, a *baal avodah*.”¹⁸

In the year of his Bar Mitzvah, the Rebbe entered into the room of his father, the Rebbe Maharash, for *Yechidus* and he asked his father, “How should one learn so that it may be called ‘learned?’” His father answered, “It is an explicit verse;¹⁹ ‘And teach it to your children,’ the word *V’sheenantom*, *Rashi* interprets it to mean “to sharpen,” (from “*shinun*,” “to sharpen”) and the word *Levanecha* may mean — until what you have learned is absolutely clear (from the word *lavan* meaning white), that is, what you have learned should be sharp, clear and to the point. “And speak in them” — this is a directive for life; “when you sit in your home” — the entire time the soul

13. The following has been translated from *Sefer HaToldos* of the Rebbe Rashab p. 14.

14. *Chanoch LeNaar*, p. 9.

15. *Sefer HaSichos* 5703, p. 64.

16. *Sefer HaSichos* 5703, p. 4.

17. See *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5711, p. 68.

18. *Sefer HaSichos* 5701, p. 27.

19. *Devarim* 6:7.

descends into the body, “and when you go on the way and when you lie down and when you stand up” — that is, at the Resurrection. The Talmud states: a person should divide his learning years into three, a third studying Scripture arousing the hidden love in the depths of the heart; a third in *Mishnah*: in changing oneself, (the word *Mishnah* deriving from the word “*shinui*,” a change); and a third in *Gemara*: in completing the vessel, (the word *Gemara* deriving from *gmar*, “end of”) and then one is a proper vessel.”

The Rebbe Rashab said: “When I heard these words from my father, I decided to learn *Shulchan Aruch*, section *Orach Chaim*, and particularly the *mitzvos* connected with the body, in such a way that my body should do the *mitzvos* by itself, the way that one bows automatically at *Modim*. I then became a man.”

Before his Bar Mitzvah, the Rebbe Maharash taught *Tanya* to the Rebbe Rashab.²⁰

On Tuesday, the 14th of Cheshvan, the Rebbe Maharash called his son, the Rebbe Rashab, and his brother, the Raza, and said to the Rashab: “In the coming week, you will be Bar Mitzvah, Mazal Tov. You should travel today to my brother, your uncle, Reb Chaim Shneur Zalman²¹ in Liadi, to receive his blessing, and most certainly he will say a *Maamar Chassidus*. You (turning to the Raza) should go with him. Stay overnight and return tomorrow night. Since the rains have made the roads and bridges dangerous, you should only travel by daylight.”

At that time, there were about thirty young men, some of them unmarried, who were resident in Lubavitch, including Yitzchak Moshe ben Avraham Chaim from Vietka, Chaim Boruch from Zhlobin and Elia Moshe from Aftzua. The Rebbe Maharash chose twelve of them to accompany the Rebbe Rashab. Four horses were attached to the large wagon in which the Rebbe Rashab and his brother, the Raza, traveled, together with the servants, Reb Pinchas Leib and Reb Yosef Mordechai,

20. See *Likkutei Dibburim*, Vol. I, p. 86 three items the Rebbe Maharash then related to the Rebbe Rashab about *Tanya*.

21. The third son of the Tzemach Tzedek — See *Beis Rebbe*, Part 3 Ch. 8.

and the twelve accompanying *chassidim*, who traveled in two separate coaches.

On the 20th of Cheshvan, 5634, the Bar Mitzvah was celebrated amidst great *simchah*. The Rebbe Rashab then said the *Maamar* “*Issa B’Midrash Tehillim*,” a *Maamar* of his father, the Rebbe Maharash, which existed in manuscript form.²²

On the 24th Teves, 5663, the Rebbe Rashab gave three reasons why *chassidim* drink *mashkeh*.²³ He then said, “We need to be careful about drinking *mashkeh*. I say “we” as an heir to my holy fathers. My father taught me how to take *mashkeh*. When I was Bar Mitzvah he gave me a cup of *mashkeh* to say *lechaim on*. Those present protested that I was still too young. My father then answered: “The reason I am giving him *mashkeh* is so he stop being a *naar* (a child). It was then that my father explained to me the well-known tune, *Nee Zshuritshi Chloptzi*.”²⁴

At the Bar Mitzvah, the Rebbe Maharash related; “The *chassid* and *gaon* Reb Yitzchak Aizik of Vitebsk received a blessing for long years from the Alter Rebbe. In the year 5607, Reb Yitzchak Aizik told me: “I merited to have blessings from the holy Baal Shem Tov, the Maggid of Mezritch and the Alter Rebbe. The Rebbe, the Tzemach Tzedek, held the *chassidim* who lived in the times of the Alter Rebbe in great esteem, particularly those who were members of the *chadarim*. “I,” said Reb Yitzchak Aizik to the Rebbe Maharash, “was honored by the Alter Rebbe with the ability to rule on the *halachah* truthfully and my entire lifetime I merited to clarify *halachah* truthfully.”

“I can keenly remember even today,” said the Rebbe Maharash, “how Reb Yitzchak Aizik trembled when he repeated to me the blessings he received from the great *tzaddikim*. Then at the request of my father the Tzemach Tzedek, Reb Yitzchak Aizik blessed me also.”²⁵

22. See *Chanoch LeNaar*, p. 9.

23. The first is “it is a *mitzvah* to bring from the *hedyot*” — see *Talmud Eruvin* 63a, *Yoma* 21b; the second “one gives the animal to drink before the *shechitah*” — *Talmud Baitzah* 40a; and the third “one waters the correct place.”

24. *Sefer HaSichos* 5705, p. 57.

25. *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5709, p. 207.

THE PREVIOUS REBBE²⁶

1. The first time he put on tefillin:

On Thursday, the 10th of Tammuz, my father instructed me to get up very early, and at eleven o'clock, after davening, my father took me to the *Oholei Kodesh* of my grandfathers, the Rebbe the Tzemach Tzedek and the Rebbe Maharash.

This was the first time that my father had taken me with him to visit the *Oholei Kodesh*, and he instructed me exactly where to stand and which *Tehillim* to say. He gave me a *Pidyon Nefesh* written in his own handwriting, and he instructed me to read it out, and showed me what to do with it after it had been read.

On that day — the 10th of Tammuz, 5651 — my father blessed me by putting his hand on my head inside the *Oholei Kodesh* of the Rebbeim. Upon our return, my father instructed me to complete the fast, and to tell nobody of the matter — not even my teacher Reb Nissan.

The next day, Friday *Erev Shabbos*, 11 Tammuz, my father called me at seven in the morning. When I arrived, he told me to shut the door. He then opened his desk drawer and took out a small pair of tefillin and said to me: “These tefillin belonged to my father, the Rebbe Maharash. He used to put them on for saying *Kerias Shema Ketanah* — in fact he wore two pairs, *Rashi* and *Rabbeinu Tam*, at the same time, and these are the *Rashi* tefillin.” My father instructed me to put them on without a *berachah* and to daven the entire prayers in his room.

From Sunday the 13th of Tammuz and on, I would come to his room every day and put these tefillin on with a *Berachah*. Thereafter I went to *shul* to pray with the *Tzibbur*, at which time I would review *Mishnayos* by heart. My father warned me to reveal this to no one.

On Shabbos, the 12th of Tammuz, my birthday, after the Shabbos meal, my father called the *chassidim*, Reb Chanoch Hendel, Reb Abba, Reb Shmuel and Reb Meir Mordechai

26. The following is a brief selection of the Previous Rebbe's talks and diary entries recollecting his Bar Mitzvah as presented in the *Sefer Yalkut Bar Mitzvah* (Heb.) p. 102-111.

Tshernin, and they *farbrenge*d together. They sent Mendel the servant to inform Reb Nissan that there was a *farbrenge*n, (my father was very grateful to Reb Nissan for all the instruction he had given me), and he came immediately. Reb Shlomo Chaim, the Shochet, Reb Yaakov Kopel Zelikson and the Rav, Reb Dovid, arrived later. My father davened *Minchah* with the melody of Simchas Torah, and the *farbrenge*n continued until late into the night. About half an hour before sunset, they took a break and made an after-blessing. My father spoke a great deal and he was in a very joyous mood, something that astonished all, but nobody dared ask why.²⁷

2. In his diary,²⁸ the Previous Rebbe adds more detail:

On Wednesday, the 9th of Tammuz 5651, my father called me and warned me that what he would now tell me I should reveal to nobody, and I should do exactly as he would instruct me. He said: "On the coming Shabbos, 12th of Tammuz, it will be your eleventh birthday and I wish to give you a *seder*, just as my father gave it to me in the name of my grandfather, the Tzemach Tzedek. The *seder* that the Alter Rebbe gave his son the Mittler Rebbe, and his grandson the Tzemach Tzedek, was that tefillin should be put on, on the eleventh birthday, but in complete privacy.

On Thursday evening I was afraid to go to sleep, for fear of getting up later than the designated time. The lack of sleep made me weary, and after I laid the tefillin on Friday morning for the first time, I fell into a deep sleep still dressed in my clothes. When Mendel the servant saw me sleeping in my clothes, he tried to awaken me but because I was so tired he did not succeed. Because my complexion had turned so pale, he decided to tell my mother. When my mother came into my room and saw the pallor of my face and what a deep sleep I was in, she grew very frightened and immediately went to tell my father. My father calmed her and told her that she had nothing to worry about.

27. *Sefer HaToldos* of the Rebbe Rayatz, Vol. I, p. 91-93.

28. *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5711, p. 171-173.

On Friday, my parents took me to my grandmother, the Rabbonis Rivkah, to receive her blessing for my birthday. At that time, my grandmother, the Rabbonis Chanah,²⁹ was also staying with us and she too blessed me. Afterwards, my parents blessed me as well.

Thereafter, my father instructed me to review the *Sedrah* with the cantillations marks. He then called me to his room and said: “On this Shabbos, when I say the *Maamar Chassidus*, you will stand by Reb Kopel Zelikson.” The chossid, Reb Kopel, would always stand in the first row when my father said *chassidus*. This piece of good news made me very happy and I ran immediately to tell my mother. Long before candle lighting, I stood in the room where my father said *chassidus* after *Kabbalas Shabbos*, and waited there for him, together with all the *chassidim*.

In the year 5651, my father started to learn *Tanya* with me three times a week. We learned only a few lines at a time, and the content was mainly stories and ideas about *Tanya*. Once my father told me: “It says in *Midrash* that when one sleeps, the soul is elevated and draws life from the supernal realms. *Chassidim* explain this to mean that, at that time, the soul is granted understanding of an idea or phrase in *Tanya*. My father then instructed me that after saying the blessing *Hamapil* before going to sleep I should reflect upon the lesson in *Tanya* we had learned together, so that I should fall asleep while thinking about *Tanya*.³⁰”

3. The Bar Mitzvah celebration:

On Sunday, 11th Iyar 5653, (two months before the Bar Mitzvah) *Parshas Acharei Mos Kedoshim*, — the day of my *yom chinuch* (that is, the day on which, to all appearances, I began to put on tefillin, although in fact I had begun to lay tefillin much earlier), my father said a *Maamar* on the verse, “Be strong and be a man.”

29. The wife of the Rebbe Reb Yosef Yitzchak of Avrutch, the son of the Tzemach Tzedek, the daughter of the *tzaddik* R. Y. Y. of Tsherkas, and the mother of the Rabbonis Shterna Sarah.

30. *Sefer HaSichos* 5705, p. 16.

The *Maamar* discussed the four terms for “man” — *Adam*, *Enosh*, *Ish*, *Gever*. In it, my father described an admirable *Adam*, and a fine *Ish*, and showed how being termed *Enosh* or *Gever* depends on each man alone.

Adam and *Ish*, he pointed out, are terms describing the essential level of the individual concerned. Specifically: *Adam* speaks of *mochin*, that is, the level of *avodah* which focuses on *Chabad* — divine service that is generated by intellectual activity. *Ish* speaks of *middos*, that is, the level of *avodah* which focuses on the emotive attributes of the soul and on the refinement of one’s character traits. *Enosh* and *Gever* are (as it were) adjectival terms, describing the essential levels of *Adam* and *Ish*. Specifically: *Enosh* indicates weakness, while *Gever* indicates strength. That is to say, that if the level of *avodah* characterized as that of *Adam* or of *Ish* is performed in a weak manner, then it may be described by the term *Enosh*. If, however, an *Adam* or an *Ish* performs the *avodah* expected of him energetically, then it may be described by the term *Gever*. This, then, is the meaning of my father’s statement, mentioned above, that whether a man is termed *Enosh* or *Gever* depends on him, and on him alone.

That was the first *Maamar* during which I experienced a pleasure that was distinctively personal. In that *Maamar* I sensed the meaning of “*Rebbe*,” according to my understanding of those days, and felt the meaning of “father.”

I remember the *farbrenge* at which the above three *chassidim* sat together after that *Maamar*, each of them explaining it to me in his own style. R. Meir Mordechai explained the level of *Adam* as referred to there, R. Hendel discussed the level of *Ish*, and my teacher, Reb Nissan, clarified the use of the terms *Enosh* and *Gever*, pointing out the extent to which one’s weakness and strength depend solely on the manner in which one’s *avodah* is carried out in practice.³¹

4. As the day of my Bar Mitzvah drew near, my father impressed three things upon me:

1. Never to fool myself.

31. *Likkutei Dibburim* Kehot (English), Vol. I, p. 222-223.

2. Never to fool somebody else.
 3. Never to allow myself to be fooled.
- All this (he said) should be “without any fuss.”

On Simchas Torah, 5704, the Previous Rebbe mentioned this story and he added: “It is now fifty years that I have been keeping my father’s instructions, month in month out, week in week out, day in day out. It is therefore impossible to fool me. I, what am I? My “*Ani*” is all “*Mah*.”³² Although I do not wish to speak of myself like this, nonetheless, this matter affects the *Klal*. Those who think they can fool me, even slightly, are fooling themselves. I know them, and if, sometimes, I do not know them, there are those who let me know.”³³

5. In preparation for my Bar Mitzvah, I had to memorize and master three *Maamarim*, one short and two long. My father directed me to repeat one of the long ones on the Monday of the week of *Parshas Balak*, which was the 12th of Tammuz, at the burial places of my grandfather (the Rebbe Maharash), and great-grandfather, (the Rebbe the Tzemach Tzedek). He told me to repeat the short one publicly, at the festive table on the same day after prayers, and the third *Maamar* at a certain time which is recorded in my notes of that time.

No one was to know of this third *Maamar*. In those days, I saw this as a major trial — but this too I withstood, even though it entailed a major battle with myself. Indeed, my life in that period presented a number of such fresh challenges, all of them seeming to demand more of a struggle than my childhood strength could muster.³⁴

6. In the year 5640, the year I was born, the 12th of Tammuz, my birthday, fell on a Monday. Likewise in the year 5653, the year of my Bar Mitzvah, the 12th of Tammuz fell on a Monday.

On Monday, the day of the Bar Mitzvah, my father began saying the *Maamar*: “The tefillin of the Master of the

32. An expression of *Bittul* — self nullification.

33. *Sefer HaSichos 5704*, p. 36.

34. *Likkutei Dibburim* Kehot (English), Vol. I, p. 217.

Universe,”³⁵ and he continued saying the *Maamar* until *Shabbos Parshas Balak*.

Every day, after he said the *Maamar*, there was a *chassidisher farbrengen* and a *seudas mitzvah*. The *farbrengen* actually started on Thursday, the 8th of Tammuz. Many guests came to Lubavitch for *Shabbos Parshas Chukas*, among them, also, guests from the Ukraine, and they all *farbrenge*d with great *simchah*. However the principal talks given by my father started on the day of the Bar Mitzvah.

Here is not the place to recount all that my father said on that occasion. I have recorded all the *sichos* in detail in my diary and I hope with the help of G-d to be able to publish certain *sichos* for public consumption. However, I will not let the occasion pass without recalling one story.

In general, the memories of any individual can fill an entire volume. This is how my father explained the verse:³⁶ “This is the book of generations of Man,” that is, that the generations of man serve to fill a book.

On Monday, the 12th of Tammuz, after we returned from the *Ohel*, and after the *Maamar Chassidus*, there was an uplifting *chassidisher farbrengen* that continued for many hours.

At six o'clock, they washed for the *seudas mitzvah*. My father was in high spirits and he said that there was a familial tradition among the *Rebbeim* that on the day of a Bar Mitzvah, the *Rebbe* would ask the Bar Mitzvah to “ask for something.”

The Alter Rebbe had requested his son, the Mittlerer Rebbe to “ask something” on the day of his Bar Mitzvah, and when the Tzemach Tzedek became Bar Mitzvah on the eve of Rosh Hashanah, the Alter Rebbe also requested from him to “ask something.” And so too, the Rebbe Maharash asked his son, my father the same request on his Bar Mitzvah. And so did my father ask me at the *seudah*, “Yosef Yitzchak — ask something.”

I asked my father:

In the *Siddur*, it is written, “It is proper to say before praying: “I accept upon myself the positive commandment to

35. *Berachos* 6a.

36. *Bereishis* 5:1.

‘Love your fellowman as yourself.’” Why was this instituted to be said before prayer — if it is because one has to have *Ahavas Yisrael* immediately upon awakening, then why is it not said together with the morning blessings?

My father replied:

When a father has many children, his greatest pleasure is to see them unified and full of love for each other. Prayer is man’s request to G-d both for his material and spiritual needs. Before such a request, one should give some pleasure to our Father in Heaven, and that is why we take this *mitzvah* upon ourselves just before the prayers.

I am recounting this story so that you may understand what kind of instruction a father should give his son on the day of his Bar Mitzvah.

Ahavas Yisrael is manifested not only through giving another person what to eat, or room and board, or a free-interest loan. *Ahavas Yisrael* must also be reflected in one’s recognition — with all one’s essence — that the needs of another are more important than one’s own. There is the well-known saying of elder *chassidim*: One should love oneself as much as one loves one’s fellow Jew.³⁷

In *Likkutei Sichos*,³⁸ the Rebbe refers to this story and points out that the message the Previous Rebbe received from his father on the day of his Bar Mitzvah was the preparation that paved the way for the entire leadership of the Previous Rebbe. The fact that the Previous Rebbe related the story to us should be taken as a personal directive to each individual. The first step in leadership — and every person can be a leader, be it in the wider community, the family, or at the very least in relation to himself — should be imbued with a spirit of *Ahavas Yisrael*, the needs of another taking precedence over one’s own needs. Even before one requests success in *avodah* — an act of *Tefillah* — one must first be united with every Jew. This is the vessel for *Hashem’s* blessing, both spiritually and materially.

7. Before my Bar Mitzvah my father gave me — for a few days — the *Maamar Issa B’Midrash Tehillim*. He told me that this

37. *Sefer HaSichos 5700*, p. 156-157.

38. Vol. II, p. 597.

was the *Maamar* that the Tzemach Tzedek gave the Rebbe Maharash for his Bar Mitzvah, and which subsequently the Rebbe Maharash gave the Rebbe Rashab for his Bar Mitzvah.

A few days before my Bar Mitzvah, my father called me to review one of the *Maamarim*, and when I finished, my father noticed that I wished to ask something. However, at that moment somebody came in to speak to him. After they had finished, my father asked me what I wanted to ask. I started to say the *Maamar*, “*Yordei HaYom Bo’Onios.*” As soon as I started to say the *Maamar*, my fathers lips started to tremble and he asked me when I had seen his father the Rebbe Maharash? I answered, that I had seen him on Friday before Shabbos — while I was awake — and I finished reviewing the *Maamar*.

Afterwards, we both went to the *Ohel* and when we set out, my father said:, “May the angel who has delivered me from all evil bless the lad” — and he mentioned my name and the name of my father. I asked my father: “If Yaakov was so humble, so why did he start with himself first? My father answered that a person must start from what is closest to himself.³⁹

8. On the 12th of Tammuz, 5653, the day of my Bar Mitzvah, I had to recite one of the *Maamarim* I had learned for the Bar Mitzvah in the *Ohel* of my grandfather, the Rebbe Maharash. The Tammuz days were very long and the *seder* was: that the Bar Mitzvah celebration continued until *Minchah* and *Maariv*, after which there was a *farbrengen* until the morning. They then went to *mikvah*, davened *Shacharis* followed by the Bar Mitzvah meal.

THE REBBE

Most of the Rebbe’s younger years were spent in the home of his father, where he amassed his immense knowledge of all areas of Torah. Eye-witnesses say that the Rebbe’s father, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Schneerson — the Rav of Yekatrinoslav — would pass entire nights learning with his son!

39. *Sichah of Shabbos Parshas Pinchas 5687.*

The *chassid*, R. Shneur Zalman Vilenkin, relates that, one *Shabbos*, the Rebbe's father's lecture was particularly esoteric in content, based as it was on *Kabbalah*. One of those present had the audacity to ask for whose benefit the Rav was saying this Torah, for nobody understood it! Reb Levi Yitzchak said: "There, in the corner, is a young boy who understands everything that I am saying."

Often Reb Levi Yitzchak used to consult with his wife, the Rebbetzin Chanah. She was wont to say: "We should hear what Mendel has to say—he has a straight head."

The Rebbetzin said, in the name of her husband, that by the time the Rebbe reached the age of Bar Mitzvah he was already a *Gaon Olam!*

A *chassid* once visited the *Yeshivah Toras Emes* in *Yerushalayim*. The *Rosh Yeshivah*, Reb Moshe Leib Shapira asked the *chassid* who he was and where he came from. The *chassid* answered that he was from Yekatrinoslav. The *Rosh Yeshiva* immediately asked him if he knew of the Rav and his son. The *chassid* answered that he knew the Rav and his son well, and he even attended the Rebbe's Bar Mitzvah. He remembered that, at the Bar Mitzvah, the Rebbe's father asked the Rebbe: "Do you know what you are becoming today?" The Rebbe did not respond, but tears sprung to his eyes.

The Rebbetzin once reminisced about the Bar Mitzvah: "After the Bar Mitzvah *derashah* — which left a great impression upon all those who heard it — the Rebbe burst out crying. Many of the guests, seeing the Rebbe cry, cried with him. I know that my husband asked our son to promise him something but I don't know what. I do remember, however, that on Friday night, the 11th of Nissan 5675, when finally the Rebbe agreed to make the promise, there was a great *simchah* in the house, and the dancing continued late into the night.⁴⁰



40. *Toldos Levi Yitzchak*, Vol. II, p. 343-346.

Appendix THE MAAMAR IN HEBREW

פרק א

איתא במדרש תילים: ר' אליעזר אומר, אמרו ישראל לפני הקב"ה, רבוננו של עולם, רוצין אנו ליגע בתורה יומם ולילה אבל אין לנו פנאי. אמר להם הקב"ה, קנימו מצות תפילין ומעלה אני עליכם כאלו אתם יגיעים בתורה יומם ולילה.

ולכאורה צריך להבין, מהו ענין מצות תפילין שעל ידי זה יפטרנו מלימוד התורה ומה ענינם זה לזה.

אף הענין הוא, דהנה פתיב "מגיד דבריו ליצחק חוקיו ומשפטיו לישראל". [איתא במדרש על זה:] יש מי שהוא מצנה לאחרים לעשות והוא אינו עושה, אבל הקב"ה מה שהוא עושה אומר לישראל לעשות, שנאמר "מגיד דבריו ליצחק חוקיו ומשפטיו".

ופירוש "מה שהוא עושה": מי הוא הגורם שיעשה הקב"ה את המצות? על ידי שישראל עושים המצות, על ידי זה גורמים שיעשה הקב"ה את מצות אלו. ונמצא, על ידי שישראל מניחים תפילין, על ידי זה גורמים להיות הקב"ה מניח תפילין.

והנה אמרו רז"ל: תפילין דמארי עלמא מה פתיב בהו? "ומי כעמך פשראל גוי אחד בארץ" — ונמצא, כי על ידי שהקב"ה מניח תפילין, על ידי זה מתגדלים ישראל.

וביאור הענין, דהנה פתיב "השקיפה ממעון קדשך מן השמים וברך את עמך ישראל".

כי הנה פתיב "רם על כל גוים הוי' כו'" שהוא מרומם כו', ומצד עצמותו "אם חטאת מה תפעול בו, ורבו פשעיך מה תעשה לו, אם צדקת מה תתן לו ומה מידך יקח". וכל העולמות עליונים ותחתונים פולא קמיה כלא ממש חשיבי, ובדכתיב "כי נשגב שמו לבדו", רק הודו וזיוו והארתו על ארץ ושמים.

(א) על הפסוק (א, ב) כי אם בתורת.

(ב) שמות רבה פרשה ל, ט — בשינוי קצת.

(ג) ברכות ו, א. ושם הובא הכתוב (דברי הימים א' יז, כא) "ומי כעמך ישראל". ולכן נראה לי דגם כאן צריך לומר כך ולא קרא דשמואל ב' ז, כג.

(ד) בארוכה ראה תורה אור פרשת מקץ דבור המתחיל "כי עמך מקור" ובשערי אורה שם.

(ה) איוב לה וז. "כשלמדתי המאמר בעל פה היה קשה עלי במקום זה מפני השינוי מלשון הכתוב (ששם הוא: או מה מידך יקח). שאלתי את כ"ק אמו"ר וענני: דו חזר ווי דא שטייט" (משיחת כ"ק מו"ח אדמו"ר שליט"א).

וְזֶהוּ "פֶד סְלִיק הַקָּב"ה לְעִילָא", רְצָה לִזְמַר, כְּשֶׁנִּסְתַּלַּק הַחַיִּית מִהַתְּאָרָה לְמַעְלָה מְעַלָּה לְבַחֲיֵינָת עֲצָמוֹתוֹ, וְאִזִּי הָעוֹלָמוֹת אֵינָם תּוֹפְסִים מְקוֹם וְהַנְהַגַּת הָעוֹלָמוֹת הוּא בְּבַחֲיֵינָת שִׁינְהוּ כְּבִיכּוֹל, כְּאֵדָם הַיֵּשֶׁן שֶׁנִּסְתַּלַּק שְׁכָלוֹ מִהַכְּלִי שֶׁהוּא הַגּוֹרֵף לְמִקּוּרוֹ וְשָׂרְשׁוֹ, וְלֹא נִשְׁאָר כִּי אִם פֶּת הַדְּמִיוֹן שֶׁהוּא רְשִׁימוֹ. לְכֹן כְּתִיב "וַיִּקְוֶן כְּיֵשֶׁן הוּי" וּכְתִיב "עוֹרָה לְמָה תִּישֶׁן הוּי", שִׁינְהוּ גִילוּי "אוֹר אֵין סוֹף בְּרוּךְ הוּא" בְּחֻקָּהּ וְחֻסְדָּהּ, בְּבַחֲיֵינָת עֲצָמוֹתוֹ וּמַהוּתוֹ יִתְבַּרֵּךְ בְּכַבּוֹדוֹ וּבְעֲצָמוֹ, וְיִאָר פְּנִיּוֹ פְּנִימִיּוֹת רְצוֹנוֹ כו'. וְהֵינּוּ עַל יְדֵי הַמְּשַׁכֵּת הַתּוֹרָה וְהַמְּצוּוֹת. וְזֶהוּ "הַבֵּט מַשְׁמִים וְרָאָה" וְ"הַשְׁקִיפָה מִמַּעוֹן קִדְשֶׁךָ מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם" — "שֵׁם מִיִּם", שֶׁהוּא בַּחֲיֵינָת הַתּוֹרָה שֶׁנִּמְשָׁלָה לְמִיִּם [שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר "הוּי כֹל צָמָא לְכוּ לְמִיִּם כו' שִׁנְהוּ קָאֵי עַל בַּחֲיֵינָת הַתּוֹרָה כו'"] וְאִזִּי "וַיְבָרֵךְ אֶת עַמְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל" — כִּי עַל יְדֵי בַּחֲיֵינָת זוֹ, נִהְיָה אֲנַחְנוּ עִם בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, נִתְרָאִים לְפָנָיו לְדָבָר חָשׁוּב. שְׁכָל עֵיקַר הַשִּׁנְיָה וְהַגְּלוּי הוּא עַל יְדֵי הַתּוֹרָה, וְהַתּוֹרָה הִיא אֲצֻלְנוּ בְּהַתְּגַלּוּת. וְזֶהוּ שֶׁאֲמַר הַכְּתוּב "נִפְתָּחוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאָרְאָה מַרְאֹת אֱלֹקִים", בַּחֲיֵינָת "אֶסְפָּקְלִרְיָא הַמְּאִירָה" — שֶׁעַל יְדֵי בַּחֲיֵינָת "שָׁמַיִם" מִתְרָאָה לְפָנָיו כְּבִיכּוֹל, כְּאֵלוֹ עַל הַרְף מְשָׁל, רוֹאָה בְּמַרְאָה הַמְּאִירָה שֶׁהוּא מְכֻלִּי זְכוּכִית. שֶׁעַל יְדֵי הַמְּרָאָה, נִרְאָה הַדְּבָר שְׂרוּאֵין בָּהּ, לְדָבָר גְּדוֹל יוֹתֵר וּמְשׁוּבַח יוֹתֵר מִמָּה שְׂרוּאֵין אוֹתוֹ כִּף בְּלִי מַרְאָה. כִּף עַל יְדֵי הַבְּטָה וְהַשְׁקָפָה בְּבַחֲיֵינָת הַתּוֹרָה, שֵׁם נִרְאִים לְפָנָיו יִתְבַּרֵּךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל, שֶׁהֵם מְקִימִים הַתּוֹרָה, בְּבַחֲיֵינָת שְׂבַח וּגְדוּלָה. וְזֶהוּ "וּמִי כְעַמְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל גּוֹי אֶחָד בְּאֶרֶץ" — פִּירוּשׁ, שֶׁהֵם מְמַשְׁכִּים בַּחֲיֵינָת "אֶחָד" בְּאֶרֶץ, לְהֵיוֹת שׁוֹרָה וּמִתְגַּלָּה בַּחֲיֵינָת הוּי "אֶחָד" שִׁינְהוּ שׁוֹרָה בְּאֶרֶץ הַתְּתוּנָה.

פֶּרֶק ב

וּבִיאור הַעֲנָן מְעַלֵּת הַתּוֹרָה, יוֹבֵן מִמְּאֹמֵר רז"ל ^ט"אֶלְפִים שָׁנָה קִדְמָה תּוֹרָה לְעוֹלָם" — פִּירוּשׁ "קִדְמָה", אֵין פִּירוּשׁוֹ בְּזִמְנָה, שֶׁהִרִי הַזְּמַן וּמְקוֹם שִׁנְיָהּ מְחוּדָשִׁים. וְקוֹדֵם שֶׁנִּבְרָא הָעוֹלָם לֹא הָיָה גַם כֵּן בַּחֲיֵינָת הַזְּמַן. אֲלָא שֶׁעֲנָן הַקִּדְמָה, הִיא קִדְמַת הַמְּעַלָּה. לְהֵיוֹת שׁוֹרֵשׁ וּמְקוֹר הָעוֹלָמוֹת, הוּא מְבַחֲיֵינָת מְדוּת, כְּמוֹ שְׂכָתוּב "שִׁשָּׁת יָמִים עָשָׂה" וְלֹא כְּתִיב "בְּשִׁשָּׁת" אֲלָא כִּי שִׁשָּׁת יָמִים אֵלוֹ, הֵם שִׁשָּׁה מְדוּת עֲלִיוֹנוֹת נִשְׁפְּלוּ בְּבַחֲיֵינָת עֲשִׂיָה.

(1) ראה על דרך זה במאמר פורים תש"ח פרק ו' ואל"ך. דבור המתחיל "בלילה ההוא" ש"ת (בספר המאמרים).

(2) חגיגה יב, א.

(3) תענית ז, א.

(ט) ראה מדרש תהלים ד, ז, בראשית רבה פרשה ח, ב. תנחומא וישב ד ושי"ג. זהר חלק ב' מט, א.

(י) זהר חלק א' רמז, א. זהר חלק ג' רצח, ב ועוד, וראה גם כן שו"ת הרשב"א חלק א' סימן תכג.

וְזֶהוּ שְׂרָאשִׁית "עֲשֶׂרָה מְאֻמְרוֹת" הוּא "בְּרֵאשִׁית, בְּרֵאשִׁית", פִּירוּשׁ "בְּרֵאשִׁית", עַל דֶּרֶךְ מַה שְׂכַתּוּב "עוֹלָם חֶסֶד יִבְנֶה", שֵׁשׁ בְּזֶה ב' פִּירוּשִׁים: הַא' בְּכַדִּי שִׁיתְהוּ עוֹלָמוֹת, וְזֶהוּ עַל יְדֵי מִדַּת הַחֶסֶד שֶׁהוּא "אָזִיל עִם כּוֹלְהוּ יוֹמִין"¹. הַב' שְׂצָרִיכִים לְבָנוֹת אֶת מִדַּת הַחֶסֶד. וְעַל דֶּרֶךְ זֶה הוּא "בְּרֵאשִׁית, בְּרֵאשִׁית", שֶׁהוּא בְּנֵן הַמִּדּוֹת, בְּכַדִּי שִׁיתְהוּ מְקוֹר לְעוֹלָמוֹת יְבִיעַ.

אָבֵל הַתּוֹרָה קָדְמָה לְעוֹלָם, לְהִיּוֹת "אוֹרֵייתָא מְחַכְמָה נְפֻקְתָּ"². שְׂעֵנִין בְּחִינַת הַמוֹחִין אֵינָם שְׂיִיכִים לְעוֹלָמוֹת כָּלֵל. וְגַם, כְּשֶׁלֹּא יֵשׁ לְמִי לְהִשְׁפִיעַ דְּבַר שְׂכָל, הָרִי הוּא יְכוֹל לִישָׁב וּלְהִשְׁכִּיל הַשְּׂכָלוֹת. מַה שְּׂאִין בֶּן בְּחִינַת הַמִּדּוֹת, עַל דֶּרֶךְ מְשַׁל מִדַּת הַחֶסֶד, כְּשֶׁלֹּא יֵשׁ לְמִי לְהִשְׁפִיעַ טוֹב וְחֶסֶד, הָרִי בְּטֵל כָּל הַמְדָּה וְיִכְלֵא הִיָּה כָּלֵל. וְכִמוֹ שְׂמַצִּינוּ בְּאַבְרָהָם, דְּכָתִיב בִּיה "וְהוּא יוֹשֵׁב פֶּתַח הָאֵהָל כְּחוּם הַיּוֹם" — שְׂעֵנִין מַה שִׁישָׁב עַל הַפֶּתַח, הוּא שְׂחַפֵּשׁ אַחַר עוֹבְרִים וְשׁוֹבִים בְּכַדִּי שִׁיתְהוּ לוֹ לְמִי לְהִשְׁפִיעַ הַחֶסֶד, כִּי בְּלִתי הַמְקַבֵּל מִתְאַבֵּד כָּל פְּעוּלַת הַמְשִׁפִיעַ כו'.

וְעַל דֶּרֶךְ זֶה יוֹבֵן לְמַעְלָה, דְּכָתִיב "וְיִכּוֹר רַחֲמֶיךָ וְחֶסְדֶיךָ כִּי מֵעוֹלָם הֵמָּה" — שְׂבַחֲהוּ הַרְחֵמִים וְהַחֶסְדִּים וְזֶהוּ שְׂיִיכִים לְעוֹלָמוֹת. וְכַנֵּ"ל בְּעֵנִין "כִּי אֲמַרְתִּי עוֹלָם חֶסֶד יִבְנֶה", וְכַדְפִּירוֹשְׁנוּ, שְׂצָרִיכִים לְבָנוֹת מִדַּת הַחֶסֶד. כִּי בְּלֵא הַתְּהוּוֹת³ אֵינָם צָרִיכִים לְמִדַּת הַחֶסֶד, כִּי עַל מִי יִתְחַסֵּד.

וְזֶהוּ שְׂמַתְחִיל הָעֵץ חַיִּים "כְּשֶׁעֲלָה בְּרִצּוֹנוֹ הַפְּשוּט לְהִיטִיב לְבוֹרְאוֹ" — שִׁזְהוּ מִצַּד טֵבַע הַטּוֹב לְהִיטִיב, שֶׁהוּא בְּחִינַת הַשְּׁפָעַת הַחֶסֶד שְׂנַמְשֶׁף מִבְּחִינַת "כִּי חִפֵּץ חֶסֶד" שֶׁהוּא בְּחִינַת הַחֶסֶד שְׂבַחֲפִין הוּי'.

אָבֵל מִבְּחִינַת הַמוֹחִין לֹא נִמְשֶׁף בְּבִרְיַאת הָעוֹלָם. וְהַגַּם כִּי אֲמָרוּ רז"ל⁴ "בְּעֲשֶׂרָה דְּבָרִים בְּרֵאשִׁית הַקֶּבֶ"ה עוֹלָמוֹ בְּחֻכְמָה וּבְתוֹבָנָה וּבְדַעַת". וּבִסְפָר יִצְיָרָה "בְּשֶׁלֶשֶׁה סְפָרִים כו' בְּסִפְר וְסוֹפֵר וְסִיפּוֹר", שְׂנַתְבָּאָר בְּדַבּוֹר הַמְתַחֵל "וּשְׂאֲבָתָם"⁵ שְׂסוֹפֵר [בְּנֵא"ו]⁶ הוּא בְּחִינַת חֻכְמָה, כְּמוֹ הַסּוֹפֵר שְׂכּוֹתֵב אֶת הַסּוֹפֵר [בְּלֵא וְא"ו שְׂנַמְרָא]⁷ בִּינָה⁸. מִכָּל מְקוֹם, מַה שְׂנַמְשֶׁף בְּמִדּוֹת, הוּא רַק בְּחִינַת "מוֹחִין שְׂבַמְדוֹת". אָבֵל לֹא בְּחִינַת "מוֹחִין בְּעֵצִים".

(א) זֶה חֵלֶק א' ג, ב, טו, ב. וְעוֹד.

(ב) נִתְבָּאָר בְּעֵץ חַיִּים שֶׁעַד כ"ה דְּרוּשׁ ב', פְּרִי עֵץ חַיִּים שֶׁעַד חֵג הַסּוֹכוֹת פְּרַק א', שֶׁעַד מֵאֵמְרֵי רִשְׁב"י פְּרִשְׁיּוֹת יִתְרוֹ תְּרוּמָה וְאִמּוֹר. לְקוּטֵי תוֹרָה דְּבוֹר הַמְתַחֵל הַאֲזִינוּ (הַשְּׁלִישִׁי) פְּרַק ו'. וְעוֹד.

1. בִּיעַ"ע — בְּרִיאה יִצִירָה עִשִׂיה.

(ג) זֶה חֵלֶק ב' קכא, א. וְרֵאָה גַם כֵּן שֵׁם פּה, א.

(ד) תְּהִלִּים כה, ו. וְשֵׁם כְּתוּב "רַחֲמִיךָ הוּי' וְחֶסְדֶיךָ", אֲבֵל בְּכִמָּה מְקוֹמוֹת בְּדֵא"ח הוֹעֵתֵךְ כְּמוֹ שְׂכּוֹתֵב כֵּאֵן.

(ט) נּוֹסַח אַחַר: הַתְּהוּוֹת עוֹלָמוֹת.

(טז) חֲגִיגָה יב, א.

(יז) הוּא אַחַד מִמֵּאֵמְרֵי חֵג הַסּוֹכוֹת תְּרֵל"ד.

(יח) עֵינִין בְּכָל זֶה לְקוּטֵי הַשֵּׁם לְהַאֲרִיז לְרֵאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה טז, ב. תוֹרָה אִוֵּר שְׂמוֹת ד"ה זֶה שְׂמִי. תוֹרַת חַיִּים דְּבוֹר הַמְתַחֵל "וְאֵלֶּה שְׂמוֹת" (דף יז וְאֵילֶךְ) לְקוּטֵי תוֹרָה דְּבוֹר הַמְתַחֵל "וְשְׂאֲבָתָם (הַשְּׁנִי).

(יט) הַטַּעַם מוֹבֵן מִמָּה שְׂכּוֹתֵב בְּמְקוֹמוֹת הַמְסוּמָנִים בַּהֲעֵרֹת יח, כ.

אָבֵל "אֹרִיזְתָּא מַחְכְּמָה נִפְקֵת". לָכֵן "אַלְפִים שְׁנָה קִדְמָה תּוֹרָה לְעוֹלָם". וְזֶהוּ עֲנִין "אַאֲלָפֶךָ חֲכָמָה" "אַאֲלָפֶךָ בֵּינָה", שֶׁהֵם בְּחִינַת "מוֹחִין", הֵם "קִדְמוֹ לְעוֹלָם" שֶׁהוּא בְּחִינַת מִדּוֹת כּו', וְזֶהוּ אֲלִפִים כּו', אֲלִפִים הוּא לְשׁוֹן אַאֲלָפֶךָ כּו'.¹

פּרָק ג

וְזֶהוּ שְׁאָמַר ר' אֶלְיָעֶזֶר "אָמְרוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל לִפְנֵי הַקָּב"ה רוֹצִים אָנוּ לֵיעַע בְּתוֹרָה", לְהִיּוֹת כִּי עַל יְדֵי לִימּוּד הַתּוֹרָה יִמְשִׁיכוּ בְּחִינַת מוֹחִין בְּמִדּוֹת, שְׁזֵהוּ מַעֲלָה גְדוֹלָה וְנִפְלְאָה כּו', "אָבֵל אֵין לָנוּ פְּנָאִי". "אָמַר לָהֶם הַקָּב"ה, קִיִּימוּ מִצְוֹת תְּפִילִין וּמַעֲלָה אֲנִי עֲלֵיכֶם כָּאֵלוֹ אֲתֶם יִגִיעִים בְּתוֹרָה יוֹמָם וְלַיְלָה" — וְהִיָּינוּ, כִּי עַל יְדֵי מִצְוֹת תְּפִילִין, מִמְשִׁיכִים לְהִיּוֹת הַקָּב"ה מְנִיחַ תְּפִילִין כְּנ"ל.

שְׁפִירוּשׁ הַקָּב"ה הוּא זו"ג דְּאַצִּילוֹת שְׁנִי"א הוּא "קִדּוּשׁ" וּמְלַכּוֹת "בְּרוּךְ" כֵּב. כְּנֹדַע מַעֲנִין "יוֹם וְלַיְלָה", וְלָכֵן כְּשֶׁאֲמָרוּי "קִדּוּשׁ" יָדַע מִשָּׁה רַבִּינוּ עֲלֵיו הַשְּׁלוֹם בְּהָר שֶׁהוּא יוֹם, וּכְשֶׁאֲמָרוּ "בְּרוּךְ" יָדַע שְׁזֵה לַיְלָה.

אָבֵל עֲנִין שֶׁהַקָּב"ה מְנִיחַ תְּפִילִין, הוּא בְּחִינַת הַמְשַׁכֵּת מוֹחִין בְּמִדּוֹת, וְהִיָּינוּ בְּחִינַת "מוֹחִין בְּעֵצִים".

וְלָכֵן הַקָּטָן שְׁאֵל הַגִּיעַ לִי"ג שְׁנָה פְּטוּר מִתְּפִילִין, כִּי אֵינוּ נִקְרָא אִישׁ, וְלֹא יֵשׁ בוֹ כִּי אִם "קִטְנוֹת הַמוֹחִין". רַק בְּהִיּוֹת(ו) בֵּן י"ג שְׁנָה יוֹם אָחָד שְׁנַעֲשֶׂה אִישׁ, אָז עַל יְדֵי הַנְּחַת תְּפִילִין מִמְשִׁיף לְהִיּוֹת הַקָּב"ה מְנִיחַ תְּפִילִין.

וְנִמְצָא מוֹבָן שְׁעֲנִין הַתְּפִילִין שְׁלֵמַעֲלָה, הוּא הַמְשַׁכֵּת "מוֹחִין בְּעֵצִים". וְנִמְצָא, כִּי זֶה בְּחִינָה אַחַת עִם לִימּוּד הַתּוֹרָה. וְלָכֵן אָמַר "קִיִּימוּ מִצְוֹת תְּפִילִין וּמַעֲלָה אֲנִי עֲלֵיכֶם כָּאֵלוֹ אֲתֶם יִגִיעִים בְּתוֹרָה יוֹם וְלַיְלָה כּו'".

וּפִירוּשׁ "כָּאֵלוֹ": כִּי עַל יְדֵי יִגִיעַת הַתּוֹרָה הִזָּה נִמְשָׁף בְּאוֹר הָעוֹלָם. וְלָכֵן אָמַר, הַגֵּם כִּי עַל יְדֵי הַתְּפִילִין נִמְשָׁף הַ"מוֹחִין" בְּשִׁרְשׁ וּמְקוֹר הַמְהַנְּוֶה עוֹלְמוֹת, מִכָּל מְקוֹם, "מַעֲלָה אֲנִי עֲלֵיכֶם כָּאֵלוֹ אֲתֶם יִגִיעִים בְּתוֹרָה יוֹם וְלַיְלָה" הוּא בְּחִינַת עוֹלָם שְׁלֵמַטָּה כּו'.



(כ) כמו כן "חכמת ראשית ומקור ההשתלשלות שמאתו בא האותיות והתהוות חדשות בספר שהוא בינה: כמו עצמיות השכל הוא נושא וסובל את האותיות שנתהוו בו שנמשך השכל בהשגה והבנה". (לקוטי תורה שיר השירים ביאור לדבור המתחיל "שימני כחותם", פרק ג' ושם יש עוד פירוש אבל ממה שכתב כאן "כמו הספר שכותב" מוכח דפה מבאר לפי הפירוש הראשון).

כא) ראה גם כן לקוטי תורה שיר השירים בתחלתו. והחרים-תרל"א פרשת תזריע ומצורע.

כב) ראה לקוטי תורה שיר השירים דבור המתחיל ששים המה (השני).

כג) ילקוט שמעוני תשא רמז תו. מדרש תהילים יט, ג. וראה גם כן פירוש הצמח צדק על תהילים (נדפס בשם יהל אור) שם סעיף ה.

1. "בהיותו" — כמוהו ב"תורת שמואל" תרל"ד-נו.

Appendix THE MAAMAR IN YIDDISH

פרק א

איתא במדרש תילים, "ר' אליעזר אומר, אמרו ישראל לפני הקב"ה: רבונו של עולם, רוצין אנו ליגע בתורה יומם ולילה, אבל אין לנו פנאי". אידן זאגן צום אויבערשטן: רבונו של עולם, מיר ווילן הארענווען אין תורה בייטאג און ביינאכט, אבער מיר האבן נישט קיין צייט. "אמר להם הקב"ה, קימו מצות תפילין ומעלה אני עליכם כאילו אתם יגיעים בתורה יומם ולילה". זאגט דער אויבערשטער צו אידן: זייט מקיים מצות תפילין, וועל איך איד פאררעכענען ווי איר וואלט הארענווען אין תורה בייטאג און ביינאכט.

איז לכאורה נישט פארשטאנדיק, וואס איז דער ענין פון מצות תפילין וואס פארטרעט לימוד התורה, און וואס איז די שייכות פון די צוויי ענינים, תפילין און לימוד התורה, איינער צום צווייטן.

נאר דער ענין איז, עס שטייט דאך מגיד דבריו ליעקב חוקיו ומשפטיו לישראל. זאגט דער מדרש אויף דעם "יש מי שהוא מצוה לאחרים לעשות והוא אינו עושה אבל הקב"ה מה שהוא עושה אומר לישראל לעשות, שנאמר מגיד דבריו ליעקב חוקיו ומשפטיו". עס איז פאראן איינער וואס הייסט אנדערע טאן אבער ער אליין טוט נישט, אבער דער אויבערשטער וואס ער אליין טוט הייסט ער אידן טאן, ווי עס שטייט מגיד דבריו ליעקב חוקיו ומשפטיו, אז זיינע דברים חוקים ומשפטים וואס ער אליין טוט, זאגט ער אידן צו טאן.

און דער פשט פון "מה שהוא עושה" איז, ווער איז גורם אז דער אויבערשטער זאל טאן די מצוות, דורךדעם וואס אידן טוען די מצוות זיינען זיי גורם אז דער אויבערשטער זאל טאן אט א די מצוות, קומט דאך אויס אז דורךדעם וואס אידן לייגן תפילין זיינען זיי גורם אז הקב"ה זאל זיין מניח תפילין.

והנה אמרו רז"ל: תפילין דמארי עלמא מה פתיב בהו? ומי פעמך ישראל גוי אחד בארץ. אז אין דעם אויבערשטנס תפילין שטייט די מעלה פון אידן אז זיי זיינען א גוי אחד בארץ. קומט דאך אויס אז דורךדעם וואס הקב"ה מניח תפילין ווערן אידן גרעסער.

קלערער פארשטיין דעם ענין, עס שטייט דאך "השקיפה ממעון קדשך מן השמים וברך את עמך ישראל", ווייל עס שטייט דאך "רם על כל גוים הוי" אז הוא יתברך איז מרום, דערהויבן פון וועלט, און מצד עצמותו איז "אם חטאת מה תפעול בו, ורבו פשעיה מה תעשה לו, אם צדקת מה תתן לו ומה מידך יקח", און אלע עולמות עליונים ותחתונים זיינען כולא קמיה כלא ממש חשיבי, און ווי

עס שטייט "כי נשגב שמו לְבָדוֹ", אז שמו איז לְבָדוֹ, העכער פון וועלט, נאר בלויז "הודו" זיוו און א האַרָה פון שמו איז על אַרְץ וְשָׁמַיִם.

און דאס איז וואס עס שטייט "כִּד סְלִיק הַקָּב"ה לְעִילָא", דאס מיינט ווען דער חיות פון דער האַרָה ווערט נסתלק למעלה מעלה צו דער בחינה פון עצמות, און דעמאלט זיינען די עולמות נישט תופס מקום, און די הנהגה פון די עולמות איז בבחינת שינה כפיכול, אזוי ווי א מענטש וואס שלאפט, וואס דער שכל ווערט נסתלק פון דער פלי — וואס דאס איז דער גוף — צו זיין מקור ושוורש, און עס בלייבט איבער בלויז דער פח הדמיון (דער פארשטעלונגס-קראפט) וואס דאס איז בלויז א רושם.

וואס דערפאר שטייט "וַיִּקַּץ כְּשֵׁן הוּי" און עס שטייט "עורה למה תישן הווי", אז עס זאל זיין דער גילוי "אור אין סוף ברבך הוא" אין חכמה און חסד, אין די בחינה פון עצמותו ומהותו ותברך בכבודו ובעצמו, און עס זאל זיין "אור פניו" עס זאל מאיר זיין פנימיות רצונו, און דאס איז — דורך די המשכה פון תורה און מצוות.

וואס דאס איז וואס ס'שטייט "הבט משמים וראה" און "השקיפה ממעון קדשך מן השמים", וואס שמים איז שם מים, וואס דאס איז בחינת התורה וועלכע איז געגליכן צו מים [ווי עס שטייט "הוי כל צמא לכו למים", וואס דאס גייט אויף בחינת התורה], איז דעמאלט וועט זיין "ובכרך את עמך ישראל", ווייל דורך אט די בחינה וועלן מיר, עם בני ישראל, געזען ווערן פאר דעם אויבערשטן פאר א דבר חשוב, ווייל דער עיקר השגה און גילוי איז דורך תורה, און תורה איז ביי אונז בהתגלות.

וואס דאס איז וואס דער פסוק זאגט "נפתחו השמים וראוה מראות אלקים", וואס דאס איז די בחינה פון אספקלריא המאירה, אז דורך די בחינה פון שמים (וואס דאס איז די בחינה פון תורה) זעט זיך פאר דעם אויבערשטן כפיכול ווי איינער וואס קוקט דורך א (לויבטנדיקן) פארגרעסער-גלאז, וואס דעמאלט זעט זיך די ואף א גרעסערע און בעסערע ווי אן דער גלאז. אזוי אויף דורך די הבטה והשקפה בבחינת התורה זעען זיך אידן (וואס זיינען מקיים תורה) פאר דעם אויבערשטן, בבחינת שבח וגדולה.

און דאס איז "ומי כעמך ישראל גוי אחד בארץ", אז זיי זיינען ממשיך די בחינה פון א אחד אין ארץ, אז עס זאל שורה זיין און מתגלה ווערן בבחינת הוי אחד אין ארץ התחתונה.

פרק ב

וביאור ענין מעלת התורה, וועט מען דאס פארשטיין פון מאמר רז"ל "אלפים שנה קדמה תורה לעולם", וואס דער פשט פון קדמה מיינט נישט קדימה אין זמן, ווייל זמן און מקום זיינען דאך ביידע מחודשים, און פאר בריאת

העולם איז דאך בחינת הזמן אויף נישט געווען. נאר קדימה מיינט קדימה אין מעלה, אז תורה איז העכער פון וועלט.

ווייל דער שורש ומקור פון עולמות איז פון בחינת מדות, ווי עס שטייט "ששת ימים עשה" און עס שטייט נישט בששת, נאר די ששת ימים זיינען דאס די ששה מדות עליונות, און ששת ימים עשה מיינט אז די ששה מדות עליונות זיינען נשפל געווארן אין די בחינה פון עשיה.

וואס דאס איז וואס דער אנפאנג פון די עשרה מאמרות איז בראשית, וואס דאס איז בראשית, וואס דער פשט פון בראשית איז, על דרך ווי עס שטייט "עולם חסד יבנה", וואס אין דעם זיינען דא צוויי פירושים, איין פירוש איז אז בכדי עס זאלן נתהווה ווערן עולמות, איז דאס דורך מדת החסד, וואס אט-די מדה איז אזיל עם כולהו יומין. און דער צווייטער פירוש איז, אז מ'דארף בויען די מדת החסד. און על דרך זה איז בראשית בראשית, וואס דאס איז בנן המדות כדי עס זאל זיין א מקור אויף עולמות ב"ע.

אבער די תורה איז קדמה לעולם, ווייל אורייתא מחכמה נפקת, תורה נעמט זיך פון חכמה, און בחינת מוחין זיינען אינגאנצן נישט שייכות צו די עולמות, און אויך ווען ס'איז ניטא צו וועמען צו משפיע זיין א דבר שכל קען ער זיצן פאר זיך און טראכטן השפלות. אנדערש איז אבער בחינת המדות. על דרך משל מדת החסד, אז ווען עס איז ניטא צו וועמען משפיע זיין טוב וחסד, ווערט דאך די גאנצע מדה בטל און אזוי ווי זי וואלט אינגאנצן נישט געווען, אזוי ווי מיר געפינען ביי אברהם אבינו, "והוא יושב פתח האוהל כחום היום", וואס דאס וואס ער איז געזעסן פתח האוהל, איז געווען ווייל ער האט געזוכט עוברים ושבים בכדי ער זאל האבן צו וועמען משפיע זיין חסד, ווייל אן א מקבל פארלירט זיך אינגאנצן די פעולה פון משפיע.

און על דרך זה וועט מען פארשטיין למעלה, וואס עס שטייט "זכור רחמיה וחסדיה כי מעולם המה", אז די בחינה פון רחמים וחסדים האבן א שייכות צו עולמות, און ווי אויבן-געערעדט אין דעם ענין פון "כי אמרתי עולם חסד יבנה", און ווי מען העט געטייטשט אז מ'דארף בויען מדת החסד, ווייל אן התהוות העולמות דארף מען דאך ניט מדת החסד, ווייל מיט וועמען וועט ער טאן חסד. און דאס איז וואס דער עץ חיים הויבט אן "קשעלה ברצונו הפשוט להיטיב לברואיו" וואס דאס איז מצד טבע הטוב להיטיב, בחינת השפעת החסד, וואס ווערט נמשך פון בחינת כי חפץ חסד, וואס השפעת החסד איז דער חסד שבחפץ הוי'.

אבער פון בחינת מוחין איז נישט נמשך געווארן אין בריאת העולם. און כאטש די רז"ל זאגן "בפשרה דברים ברא הקב"ה עולמו, בחכמה ובתבונה ובדעת", און אין ספר יצירה שטייט "בשלושה ספרים כו' בספר וסופר וסיפור", און ווי עס רעדט זיך אין מאמר ושאלתם, אז סופר מיט א ו' איז חכמה און ספר אן ו' איז בינה, אזוי ווי דער סופר וואס שרייבט א ספר, פונדעסטוועגן, דאס

וואס ווערט נמשך אין מדות איז דאס נאר בחינת מוחין שבמדות אבער נישט מוחין בעצם. אבער אורייתא מחכמה נפקת איז דאס פון מוחין בעצם. דערפאר איז אלפים שנה קדמה תורה לעולם וואס דאס איז אאלף חכמה אאלף בינה, וואס דאס ווייניען די בחינה פון מוחין, ווייניען זיי העכער פון עולם וואס איז מדות, און דאס איז אלפים, פון לשון אאלף.]

פרק ג

וזהו שאמר ר' אליעזר "אמרו ישראל לפני הקב"ה רוצין אנו ליגע בתורה", ווייל דורך לימוד תורה וועלן זיי ממשיך זיין בחינת מוחין אין מדות, וואס דאס איז א מעלה גדולה ונפלאה, "אבל אין לנו פנאי", מיר האבן נישט קיין צייט. זאגט צו זיי דער אויבערשטער "קיימו מצות תפילין ומעלה אני עליכם כאלו אתם יגיעים בתורה יומם ולילה", ווייל דורך מצות תפילין איז מען ממשיך אז עס זאל זיין הקב"ה מניח תפילין.

וואס דער פירוש פון הקב"ה איז זיין דאצילות (ז"א און מלכות דאצילות), וואס ז"א איז קדוש און מלכות איז ברוך, ווי ס'איז באוואוסט וועגן דעם ענין פון יום און לילה, אז קדוש איז יום און ברוך איז לילה, וואס דערפאר בשעת די מלאכים האבן געזאגט קדוש האט משה רבינו עליו השלום אויפן בארג געוואוסט אז ס'איז טאג, און ווען זיי האבן געזאגט ברוך האט ער געוואוסט אז ס'איז נאכט.

אבער דער ענין פון הקב"ה מניח תפילין איז, די המשכה פון מוחין אין מדות, וואס דאס מיינט בחינת מוחין בעצם, און דעריבער איז א קטן וואס איז נאך נישט געווארן דרייצן יאר, איז ער פטור פון תפילין, ווייל ער ווערט נישט אנגערופן "איש" און האט בלויז קטנות המוחין, נאר ווען ער ווערט א בן י"ג שנה יום אחד, וואס דעמאלט ווערט ער א איש, איז דעמאלט דורך הנחת תפילין איז ער ממשיך אז עס זאל זיין הקב"ה מניח תפילין.

איז פון דעם פארשטאנדיק, אז דער ענין פון תפילין שלמעלה איז המשכת מוחין בעצם, קומט דאך אויס אז דאס איז איין בחינה מיט דעם ענין פון לימוד התורה. און דערפאר זאגט ער "קיימו מצות תפילין ומעלה אני עליכם כאלו אתם יגיעים בתורה יומם ולילה", ווייל דורך תפילין טוט מען אויף דעם זעלבן ענין ווי דורך לימוד התורה.

און דאס וואס ער זאגט "כאילו" (וואס דאס ווייזט אויס אז עס איז נישט ממש די זעלבע זאך). איז עס ווייל דורך גייעה אין תורה וואלט עס נמשך ווערן אין אויר העולם, דערפאר זאגט ער אז הגם דורך תפילין ווערט המשכת המוחין אין שורש ומקור המהווה עולמות, פונדעסטוועגן "מעלה אני עליכם כאילו אתם יגיעים בתורה יומם ולילה" אין בחינת עולם שלמטה.



THE REBBE'S LETTER TO A BAR MITZVAH

בי"ה
ברוקלין, נ.י.

שלום וברכה!

במענה על ההודעה ע"ד הכנסו לגיל מצות,

הנה יה"ר מהשי"ת אשר מבן שלש עשרה למצות יגדל לבן חמש עשרה וכו' כפסק המשנה (אבות פרק ה'), ויוסיף התמדה ושקידה בלימודו בתורה, בתורת הנגלה וכן בתורת החסידות ויהדר בקיום המצות. והשי"ת יצליחו להיות חסיד ירא שמים ולמדן.

בברכה



By the Grace of G-d
Brooklyn, N. Y.

Greetings and Blessings,

In response to the notification about your entry into the age of *mitzvos*:

May it be G-d's will that from "thirteen, the age at which one is obliged to observe the *mitzvos*," you will grow up to "fifteen, the age [for the study of *Gemara*]" — and so on, as determined by the *Mishnah* (in *Avos*, chapter 5). May you increase your persistent diligence in your study of the Torah — both in *nigleh*, the revealed plane of the Torah, and in the teachings of *Chassidus* — and may you perform the *mitzvos* with loving attention.

And may G-d grant you success in your efforts to become a chassid, a G-d-fearing Jew, and a Torah scholar.

With blessings,
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