

Chapter 24

TEPHILLIN A YEAR EARLY

It was on erev Pesach 5774 (2014) that my son-in-law Baruch Mizrahi hy'd was murdered in a terrorist attack on his way to my apartment in Kiryat Arba to celebrate the Seder with my family. His eldest son, Itai, at the time was eight and a half years old. A few years later he, an orphan, would reach the age to begin putting on Tephillin.

I recollect seeing a film on the British television, I think about fifty years ago, where an orphan who had reached the age of 12 was told that since he was an orphan his barmitzvah was a year earlier, namely at the age of 12. I remember that there was then an article in the London "Jewish Chronicle" questioning this assertion.

I had also learned, but I cannot recollect from where, that an orphan would start putting on Tephillin at the age of 12, rather than just before his Barmitzvah. I therefore decided that in preparation for Itai's twelfth birthday, I would research this subject and write a paper on it.

Let me first mention that Itai's second name is Chaim. Why the name Chaim? According the Sephardi tradition, and Baruch was a Sephardi, it is customary to name a boy after a living grandfather, whilst in Ashkenazi tradition, and I am an Ashkenazi, one names after a deceased relative, often a grandfather. In addition to my name being Chaim, Baruch's father who had died a number of years earlier, was also called Chaim. Therefore, if an Ashkenazi asks who Itai Chaim is named after, one answers Baruch's father, and conversely, if a Sephardi asks, one answers that it after me!

Until recently, if one wanted to do research, one would have to go to libraries and painstakingly look through book after book, and then photocopy the relevant material, and only then begin writing one's paper. Today all this has changed, making leaving one's house and going to various libraries almost a rare occurrence! One just has to sit in front of one's computer and go into the internet. There there is an unlimited amount of information. For research on a Jewish religious subject there is website called HebrewBooks where one can find (as of November 2018) over 52,000 books, with numbers increasing from day to day. These can be read online and any pages can be freely printed out. This was the method I mainly utilised to research and write my paper on an orphan starting to put on Tephillin at the age of 12.

The first question to ask is why should the training of a boy to put on tephillin who has not yet reached the age of barmitzvah be later than for other mitzvot. For mitzvot such as tzitzit, shofar, berachot, one begins to train them at an age well before their barmitzvah. However, the reason for beginning with tephillin just before the age of barmitzvah is that the wearing of tephillin requires a "clean body" namely that the wearer will not flatulate when wearing them. One

therefore waits until almost the last possible moment before the barmitzvah, or even until the actual day of the barmitzvah.

Some have argued that there is a source in the Gemara for specifically an orphan to start putting on tephillin before his barmitzvah, although one cannot drive from this source a time period of one year.

In fact, it is only for less than two hundred years that has there been discussion on this question. Two possible reasons have been given to advancing the age at which an orphan starts to put on tephillin. One is that it is in the merit of the departed parent, and the other is to have sufficient time for an outsider, in place of the departed father, to teach the boy how to put on tephillin. The difference between these two reasons is that if it is the mother has died, then only the first reason will be applicable, but not the second one since it is the duty of the father to teach the boy to put on tephillin. The last Lubavitcher Rebbe discounted both these reasons.

Today however it is very unusual for an orphan to start putting on tephillin when he becomes 12 years old.

Another point which has been made by a number of orphans is that because they were orphans they reached the age of barmitzvah when they were 12 years old! These reported cases occurred in Eastern Europe, the United States and even in Israel. In the Israeli case, Rabbi Aryeh Levin went to the “barmitzvah” celebration in order to make the widowed mother feel happy - obviously he realised that it wasn’t the real barmitzvah of the orphan.

After the paper was written in Hebrew and checked, it was printed out. On the title page I added (in Hebrew) “This paper was written on the occasion of the 12th birthday of Itai Chaim Mizrahi the son of Baruch Mizrahi hy’d murdered in a terrorist attack...” I had originally intended giving this paper to Itai on his 12th birthday, but I was persuaded not to do so. The reason was that Itai is very sensitive and he might worry if he did not start putting on tephillin when he was 12 years old.

During the summer of 2018, I submitted this paper by e-mail to the journal “Sinai” published by Mosad Harav Kook in Jerusalem for publication and a few weeks before Rosh Hashana I received by e-mail a galley to check, which I immediately did. I was hoping that the journal would be published before Rosh Hashanah, namely before Itai’s Barmitzvah. Indeed, I received by post a copy of the journal a few days before Rosh Hashanah. Since “Sinai” no longer gave the authors of papers published in their journal, 20 reprints of the article, I ran off a number of copies which I then bound. I had added on the front page that this article was written on the occasion of Itai’s barmitzvah. I put a copy in my Shul in Kiryat Arba, and when I went to Modi’in for the barmitzvah gave Itai’s Shul a copy, and I also took a number of copies to the hall where the barmitzvah was celebrated.

Before their barmitzvahs, the norm is for boys to receive just one pair of tephillin. Itai however, received three pairs of tephillin donated or paid for organisations or people who gave tephillin for barmitzvah boys whose parent had been murdered in a terrorist attack. He was offered a further two pairs, but his mother Hadassah asked that the donors give him something else in its place.

One of the pairs was made specially for him in Kiryat Arba. A number of years ago, Baruch had a new pair of tephillin made in Kiryat Arba and he chose the most mehudar pair – “gasot”. I ordered the batim for Itai to be made by this same person and I had a Sepharadi sofer to write the parashiot. These parashiot were then checked manually by a different sofer and then by a computer and I also received a photocopy of the parashiot. I had asked that both the batim and the parashiot be made specially for Itai, and not just taken from stock. When the batim and parashiot were ready, the man who made the batim invited Itai and myself to his workshop. There he showed us a film he had produced showing how batim are made and then he invited me to put the parashiot into the batim, which he then sewed up. A man who gives money for tephillin for boys whose parent had been murdered in a terrorist attack paid the entire cost. I then bought the special cylindrical box which stores the tephillin and talit, and I had his name embroidered on it. I then prepared a number of labels on which I wrote Itai’s name, address and telephone number which I attached to different parts of this box and also to the outer boxes for the tephillin.

Another pair of tephillin were given to Itai at a ceremony held during the December prior to his barmitzvah at the Kotel and ended at the President’s Residence. It was organised by the Terror Victim’s Association and there were 65 orphans due to terror attacks at this ceremony. The news clipping on this event mentioned just the name of Itai and two sisters whose mother had been murdered.

The third pair of tephillin were given to Itai at a ceremony specifically for Itai held about two weeks before his barmitzvah. It began by Itai being led under a chuppah accompanied by many of his classmates from just outside the walls of the Old City to a place where light refreshments were served. They then went to the Kotel where Shacharit took place. It was arranged for a Thursday so that there would be Reading the Torah. Since Itai was still prior to his barmitzvah, he could not be called up to the Torah, so instead I was called up and Itai said the berachot together with me. This was then followed by dinner in a nearby restaurant and then, following minchah, Itai and his classmates returned home.

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המלכת לויטוב חיה
על ידי המחברים
Hilson Michael
שנת
Bar mitzvah
Bar mitzvah

1 תוצאות עבור חיפוש במאגרי הספרייה

Bar mitzvah : a history / Rabbi Michael Hilson
Michael Hilson author 2014
Lincoln ; London : University of Nebraska Press

Bar mitzvah : a history / Rabbi Michael Hilson
Michael Hilson author
Lincoln ; London : University of Nebraska Press
2014
Bar mitzvah
Bar mitzvah – History
How Bar Mitzvah began – How Bar Mitzvah became popular – The spread and regulation of Bar Mitzvah – Jewish confirmation – Bar Mitzvah – Into the modern age – Current issues and trends – The evidence assessed
"Published by the University of Nebraska Press as a Jewish Publication Society book"
Includes bibliographical references (pages 207-254) and index
The Jewish coming-of-age ceremony of bar mitzvah was first recorded in thirteenth-century France, where it took the form of a simple statement by the father that he was no longer responsible for his thirteen-year-old son. Today, bar mitzvah for boys and bat mitzvah for girls are more popular than at any time in history and are sometimes accompanied by lavish celebrations. How did bar mitzvah develop over the centuries from an obscure legal must into a core component of Judaism? How did it capture the imagination of even non-Jewish youth? Bar Mitzvah is a comprehensive history of the ceremonies and celebrations for both boys and girls. An cultural anthropology informed by rabbinic knowledge, it explores the origins and development of the most important coming-of-age milestone in Judaism. Rabbi Michael Hilson has sought out every reference to bar mitzvah in the Bible, the Talmud, and numerous other Jewish texts spanning several centuries, extracting a fascinating miscellany of information, stories, and commentary. Provided by publisher. "How the bar mitzvah developed over the centuries from an obscure legal ritual into a core component of Judaism and how it captured the imagination of everyone, including many non-Jewish youth"—Provided by publisher
xvii, 318 pages : illustrations ; 23 cm
The National Library of Israel
2014C
ISBN97808032765471 (paperback) ISBN96827654677 (paperback) ISBN96795827611566 (paperback) ISBN96827611668 (pdf) ISBN968768827611672 (pdf) ISBN96827611576 (epub) ISBN96827611577 (audiobook)
http://www.nli.org.il/pnms/_libray/ibw/ibwaction/03Daplay.do?word=IL&word=HILSON,%20MICHAEL%202014C
Google Books® is an online service that digitizes and provides access to books.

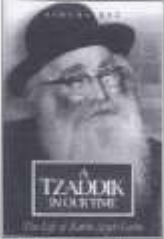
Book I referred to at the Israel National Library in Jerusalem

A Tzaddik in Our Time: The Life of Rabbi Aryeh Levin

Simcha Raz
Feldheim Publishers, 2008 - Biography & Autobiography - 512 pages

0 Reviews

5+



Book I utilised when writing this paper



צט

האם ילד יתום מתחיל להניח תפילין בגיל 12

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מאת

חיים סיימונס

הגמרא¹ נותנת סימנים מאיזה גיל ראוי להנך את הקטן לקיים מצוות שונות, בקשר לתפילין כתוב: "קטן היודע לשמור תפילין אביו לוקח לו תפילין".² השו"ע מפרט: "שלא יישן ושלא יפיח בהם ושלא ליכנס בהן לבית הכסא".³ מאחר והיום נוהגים להניח תפילין רק בזמן תפילת שחרית,⁴ החשש של שינה או כניסה לבית הכסא עם תפילין הוא לא שכיח, אולם לא כך עם הפחה, החוקרים הגיעו למסקנה שכל אדם מפיח בין 8 ל-20 פעמים ביום,⁵ ולכן יש חשש שאדם יפיח בזמן שהוא לובש תפילין, משום כך פסקו שצריכים זהירות רבה בנושא זה, עד כדי כך שמי שלא יכול לשמור עצמו מהפחה לא יתפלל את תפילת העמידה, אלא רק גיד קריאת שמע של שחרית עם ברכותיה, "אך בלא תפילין".⁶ המסקנה: היות ואנו חוששים שהקטן יפיח בזמן שהוא מעוטר בתפילין, אנחנו קובעים שהוא יתחיל להניח תפילין קרוב לגיל בר מצווה, או אפילו בו ביום שהגיע לגיל מצוות, שלא במצוות אחרות כמו למשל: ציצית, לולב וסוכה שבהן הקטן מתחיל לקיים בגיל הרבה יותר צעיר מגיל הבר מצווה.

למעשה ישנן דעות שונות ביחס לשאלה מתי יתחיל הילד להניח תפילין בטרם

1 סוכה מב, א ע"ב, ב, כ.

2 שם.

3 שו"ע א"ח סי' לו סעי' ג דמ"א.

4 שו"ע א"ח סי' לו סעי' ב.

5 e.g. Michael D. Levitt et al, "Evaluation of an extremely flatulent patient: Case report and proposed diagnostic and therapeutic approach", American Journal of Gastroenterology (1998) vol.93 pp.2276-2281.

6 שו"ע א"ח סי' לו סעי' ב': מיב סי' לח סעי' ד.

First page of my paper in the journal "Sinai"

האם ילד יתום מתחיל להניח תפילין בגיל 12

המאמר הזה נכתב ע"י
הרב ד"ר חיים סיימונס
לקראת בר-המצווה של נכדו
איתי חיים מזרחי נ"י
בן נצ"מ ברוך מזרחי ז"ל הי"ד
שנרצח בפיגוע חבלני
בדרכו לקרית ארבע
בערב פסח תשע"ד

המאמר מופיע ברבעון "סיני"
של מוסד הרב קוק ירושלים
תשע"ח כרך קנא עמ' צח-קה

Watch: J'lem Bar Mitzvah event for children of terror victims

Ceremony for 65 children whose parents were murdered or injured in terror attacks starts at Western Wall, ending at President's Residence.

[Contact Editor](#)

Mordechai Sones, 21/12/17 14:37

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Special Bar Mitzvah

The Terror Victim's Association held a Bar- and Bat-Mitzvah event for 65 orphans, disabled children, bereaved siblings, and children whose parents were murdered or injured in terrorist attacks over the years.

The ceremony began in the morning at the Western Wall and ended at the President's Residence.

Among the celebrants this year were Moria and Linoi Nava, the daughters of Ilana Nava who was killed in the terror attack in Tel Aviv's trendy [Sarona](#) market last year and Itai Mizrahi who lost his father [Baruch Mizrahi](#), a senior figure in Israel's IDF and police intelligence forces, in a shooting attack near Hevron three years ago.

