



Adapted from the sefer *במוצאי שבת* a collection of maamarim on
תנא דבי אליהו given by the Tolner Rebbe shlita at Melave Malka

Melave Malka Parshas Tzav 5760

As we approach the *yahrzeit* of the Tzemach Tzedek of Lubavitch zt”l, (13 Nissan), I would like to share a *maaseh* about his childhood, that I found in the *Sefer Hasichos* of his descendant Rav Yosef Yitzchak of Lubavitch zt”l.

“As a little boy, the Tzemach Tzedek used to see his grandfather, the Baal Hatanya zt”l *davening* with *tallis* and *tefillin*. Children like to imitate adults, and the little boy cut potatoes into the shape of *tefillin*, made *retzuos* out of string, and put them on his hand and head. The door of the Baal Hatanya’s room was riddled with holes and cracks that were made by the *chasidim* who wanted to observe the Rebbe. A curtain was hung over the door on the inside, to protect the Rebbe’s privacy. However, sometimes Zalman the *shamash* forgot to arrange the curtain, and the *chasidim* were able to get a glimpse of the Rebbe.

They observed the Rebbe davening in his *tallis* and *tefillin* while his little grandson stood next to him wearing his “potato *tefillin*” and *shockeling*. As the Baal Hatanya took off his Rashi *tefillin*, and proceeded to put on the *Shimusha Rabbah* and Rabeinu Tam *tefillin*, the little boy took off his “tefillin”. However, his string *retzuos* got tangled and he began to cry. The Baal Hatanya bent over and helped his grandson untangle them. The *chasidim* were very moved by this demonstration of the Rebbe’s warmth and closeness to his grandson.

In the year תקנ"ג the Baal Hatanya said a very deep *maamar* on the *mishanah* על שלושה דברים העולם עומד. The *chasidim* had difficulty understanding the *maamar*, and they Rebbe acquiesced to their request



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for a *chazarah* of the *maamar*. They crowded into the Baal Hatanya's room to hear the *chazarah*. The renowned *chasid*, Rav Isaac of Homil, even though still a young man, was privileged to be part of the group. He noticed the Rebbe's little grandson, the Tzemach Tzedek, also pushing his way into the room. Since the Baal Hatanya was still wearing his *tefillin*, he assumed that the *retzuos* of the boy's play *tefillin* had become tangled again, and that he wanted his grandfather to help him. When he saw that the boy didn't have his little *tefillin*, Rav Isaac told the boy, "R. Mendeleh, don't push".

The Baal Hatanya had been explaining the *maamar* with his eyes closed. When he heard Rav Isaac tell the boy not to push, he told him (in a *nigun*), "Leave him, he is listening, you will yet know that he is listening."

Years later, in the year תקפ"ח, after the passing of the Mittlerer Rebbe ז"ל, the Tzemach Tzedek, who initially did not want to assume leadership, eventually said his first *maamar* on the Mishnah על שלושה דברים העולם עומד. When Rav Issac of Homil heard the *maamar* he realized that the Tzemach Tzedek began by repeating the *maamar* of the Baal Hatanya. He recalled the Baal Hatanya's statement, "You will yet know that he is listening".

While this story certainly illustrates the greatness of the Tzemach Tzedek, that isn't the only reason it has been told from generation to generation. We need to study, understand, and internalize the words of the Baal Hatanya. He taught us that every child, even the youngest, watches, hears, and understands everything. Often, adults want to hide things from children, but it isn't really possible.

As Chazal remind us, מידה טובה מרובה, the positive always outweighs the negative. Children certainly notice, remember, and are influenced by the ways of Torah, mitzvos, and *middos tovos* that they observe, even when they are very little. Those observations penetrate to the depth of their



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young souls and as they mature, they will display the fruits of those spiritual seeds that were planted years earlier.

Pesach is the time that we fulfill the mitzvah of telling our descendants the story of *yetzias Mitzrayim*. If we bring that story to life, by transmitting it with *emunah peshutah* and *bitachon* in Hakadosh Baruch Hu, the impressions left in our children's hearts will guide them as they grow and develop. Whoever invests effort in this *mitzvah* will be *zocheh* to see their descendants עוסקים בתורה ומצוות אכי"ר



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