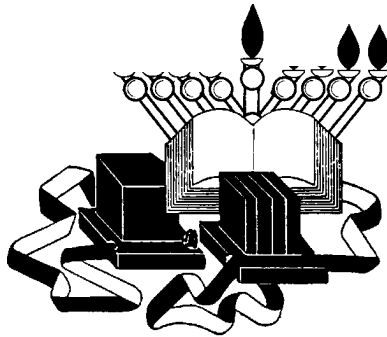


*A Guide to a  
Chassidic Bar Mitzvah*



*Bar Mitzvah Celebration of*

*Mendel Mann*

*Second Candle of Chanuka*

*December 22, 2011*





*Dear Friends,*

*With gratitude to the Almighty and joy in our hearts we welcome you to join in the celebration of our dear son Mendel's Bar Mitzvah. Your presence here today enhances our Simcha, making it a truly wonderful and memorable occasion.*

*In Judaism, the Bar Mitzvah marks a most significant state. Mendel has reached a milestone in his life. He is no longer a mere boy, today he becomes a man! He feels an awareness of his role in the Jewish nation, a pride to identify with our beautiful tradition and heritage. As a Bar Mitzvah boy he creates an eternal commitment to follow in the way of our forefathers to serve Hashem.*

*In honor of Mendel's Bar Mitzvah, we are presenting a guide which includes explanations and traditions associated with the celebration. Included are various short stories and helpful insights about the Mitzvah of Tefillin.*

*With prayerful wishes for the Redemption through Moshiach when, "The world will be filled with the knowledge of G-d, like the waters cover the seabed." May this take place speedily in our days!*

*Rabbi Shmuel & Tzippy Mann*



*A copy of the letter  
that the Rebbe sent to young men  
in honor of their Bar Mitzvah.*

B"H,  
Greetings & Blessings!

In response to being notified concerning his entering into the age of Mitzvos, May it be G-d's will that from the age of 13 when he is dutifully responsible in the observance of the Mitzvohs, he should go on to the age of 15 (which is the age of the study of Talmud) etc. according to the ruling of the Mishnah (Avos, ch. 5).

May he add diligence and devotion in his study of Torah, both in the study of the Talmud as well as the study of Chassidus, and he should fulfill the Mitzvohs loyally and enthusiastically. And may G-d should grant him success to be a Chosid, a G-d fearing Jew and a Torah Scholar.

With blessing,  
(The Rebbe's signature)

RABBI MENACHEM M. SCHNEERSON  
Lubavitch  
770 Eastern Parkway  
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מנחם מענדל שניאורסאהן  
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770 איסטערן פארקוויי  
ברוקלין, נ.י.  
ב"ה,  
ברוקלין, נ.י.

האברך  
ש"י

שלום וברכה!

במענה על הודעתו ע"ר הכנסו בקרוב לגיל מצוה,  
הנה יה"ר מהשי"ה אשר סבן שלש עשרה לפצוח  
יגדל לבן חמש עשרה וכו' כמסק השטעה (אבות פרק ה')  
ויסיף התפדה וסקירה בלימודו בתורה בתורה הנגלה  
וכן בתורה החסידות ויהדר בקיום המצוה, והשי"ה  
יבליחו להיות חסיד ירא שמים ולמדן.

ברכה



## what is a bar mitzvah?

**B**ar-Mitzvah literally means “Son of Mitzvah,” which describes the boy now responsible to do all Mitzvot (commandments).

The G-dly soul enters man in its entirety at the age of 13. The boy then attains his religious maturity and becomes responsible to fulfill all Torah commandments.

This occasion is cause for great celebration and gratitude to G-d, and hence the Bar-Mitzvah ceremony. One becomes Bar-Mitzvah automatically on one’s thirteenth birthday, with or without a party!

Among his many new responsibilities, beginning from his Bar-Mitzvah day and onward, he must wrap Tefillin every day of the week besides Shabbat and certain holidays.

The number 13 has the same numerical value as the word Echad — one. This demonstrates that at the age of Bar Mitzvah the boy becomes one with his people, united in their task of making the world an abode for the Divine. This unity is further demonstrated in that the boy may now be counted for a Minyan (quorum).

The number 13 also shares the same numerical value as the word Ahavah — love. It is therefore appropriate that the Bar Mitzvah boy dedicate his first actions toward happily helping another Jew in the spirit of Ahavat Yisrael. This applies to material assistance, such as Tzedakah, as well as helping in a spiritual sense by positively influencing a friend in the performance of good deeds.



Traditionally boys are called up to the Torah on the day of their Bar-Mitzvah (or the Shabbat afterward), reflecting their new status as adult participants in the prayers. In some communities, the boy reads from the Torah and/or chants the Haftorah on the Shabbat after he becomes Bar-Mitzvah.

The Torah reading is not an obligation and does not replace the much more important Mitzvot ushered in on the Bar-Mitzvah day. (In fact, some consider the time needed to educate a 12 year-old too precious and opt to use the preparation time to teach the young man about many of his upcoming responsibilities and their meaning.)



### what is a mitzvah?

**T**he idea of 'Mitzvot' is fundamental to the Jewish experience and identity. We all know that Jews perform Mitzvot. But what is a Mitzvah?

**Good Deed:** In popular usage, to 'do a Mitzvah' is to do a good deed. The operative word is 'deed'. To be a Jew is to be actively involved in doing good things. Good ideas and speech are important, but good deeds must result from our thoughts and words; the action is what counts.

**Commandment:** Linguistically, 'good deed' is an inaccurate translation of the word 'Mitzvah'. The Hebrew word 'Mitzvah' actually means 'commandment'.

Mitzvot aren't just acts that we deem to be important. They are G-d's instructions for life. So fulfilling a



Mitzvah is obeying a command. It is an act of obedience to a higher authority: G-d.

Bond: In its deepest sense, Mitzvah means 'connection' or 'bond'. The human spirit has a transcendent dynamic; the soul wants to escape the shallowness of physical life. We want to connect with G-d.

But how? How can a finite creature bond with an infinite G-d?

The answer is 'Do a Mitzvah'.

Each Mitzvah is another bridge to the creator, another connection with the divine. In this sense, Mitzvot are seen as opportunities not just obligations.

As a Bar-Mitzvah, the boy officially enters the 'Mitzvah-system'. As a child, he wasn't a full participant in this system.

He was certainly able to perform good deeds, but he was still missing a crucial part of the Mitzvah concept. He didn't have a true experience of the latter two Mitzvah definitions.

Why?

G-d doesn't expect more than we can deliver.

A child is not yet mature and lacks proper self-control, so it is not surprising when he acts out of line. We want him to perform, but we also understand that he can't be fully expected to behave like an adult. G-ds' commands are real obligations, and a child doesn't have any religious obligations per se. It is only post- Bar Mitzvah that a young man becomes obligated in the Mitzvot. At a Bar Mitzvah, we celebrate the fact that the commandment/bond elements of Mitzvot begin to apply.



## the maamar

**A** Maamar is a Chassidic discourse focusing on a deep mystical theme. The maamar that Mendel will deliver today, on the theme of Tefillin, was first delivered by the Rebbe Rashab, the fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe at his Bar Mitzvah, and repeated by his son, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak, the Previous Rebbe, at his Bar Mitzvah.

In preparation for the maamar, the assembled sing a moving melody, called the Nigun Hachanah. The maamar focuses on the unique spiritual influences aroused by tefillin, explaining that the natural order of the world reveals the supernal middos, G-d's emotional qualities. Emotion has a limit. A person's intellect, by contrast, enables him to expand and reach new horizons. So too, tefillin, which draw down G-d's intellectual faculties, elevate the person and the creation as a whole, to new heights.

### a BRIEF synopsis

*By Yoli Kranz*

The centerpiece of the bar mitzvah boy's maamar, or discourse, is a famous exchange between the people of Israel and the Almighty, as reported to us by the Midrash: "Master of the Universe," says Israel, "we truly wish to study your Torah day and night, but we simply don't have the time." G-d's response is at once illuminating and puzzling: "Strictly observe, then, my charge to you of donning tefillin, or phylacteries, and I will consider this as if you were indeed engaged in the study of Torah day and night."





What is the relationship between tefilin and Torah? And if one is as good as the other, why do we need both? It is to these questions that the Rebbes of Lubavitch turn their mystic' gaze in this concise ma'amar first articulated by the Rebbes at their own bar mitzvahs. For most Chassidic children, it is their first introduction to the uniquely Chabad-Chassidic pursuit of the Divine and to many of the terms and phrases that form the backbone of any would-be spiritual adventurer's guidebook. The ten sephirot, Divine wisdom, alternative celestial realms and emotional development all these and more have their place in this "beginner's" discourse for the newly-minted Jewish man.

The discussion centers around the Midrashic notion that G-d is no arbitrary authoritarian; He, in fact, observes and performs each and every commandment, or mitzvah, that He seeks of mankind. This reverse anthropomorphism, as it were, leads the Sages of the Talmud to assert that, on a spiritual plane, the Almighty responds to Israel's performance of the Tefillin ritual by donning heavenly Tefillin of His own. According to the Talmud, the Tefillin upon high are inscribed with scriptures that extol mankind for its efforts, through good deeds and acts of kindness, to make the world a better place. This brings the ma'amar to conclude that the essence of the heavenly Tefillin must then be an empowerment, a G-dly enabling of man with the power to infuse the universe around him with the Divine.

And what of Torah? The Zohar infers from yet another Midrashic passage that a person's study of Torah likewise infuses the world with an other-worldly energy.



“The Torah predated the universe by 2,000 years”, states the Midrash, likely meaning something other than earthly years since the notion of time itself was created along with the universe. From the kabbalist’s worldview, it all makes perfect sense: the Torah emanates from the Divine faculty of wisdom whilst the universe derives from Divine emotion. In many ways, wisdom is a facet of self, closer to and more intricately intertwined with the essence of self. It follows then, that in many ways, the Torah is more intricately intertwined with the essence of G-d than is the universe, something that is “outside” of Him, as it were. Torah study by a human being draws on that Divine essence of Torah and reflects it into the surrounding earthly environment.

Coming full circle, the ma’amar closes the missing link between Tefillin and Torah. In their exchange with the Almighty, Israel expresses its desire to study Torah day and night, something that would enable it to continually infuse its earthly environment with pure and unadulterated G-dliness. But it doesn't have the time, the reality of life does not afford it that luxury. The Almighty responds with a counteroffer: take this precious mitzvah of Tefillin and use it to imbue your world with pureness, with Divine essence. G-d promises to uniquely empower the Tefillin mitzvah with the same inspirational energy normally reserved for Torah study and what is more, by “day and night”, with the power to inspire both in heaven and on earth.





*The Significance of the Joy of a Bar Mitzvah Celebration  
to all of the Jewish People*

**קטע משיחת כ"ק אדמו"ר בנוגע לבר מצוה  
ש"פ ויק"פ, פ' החודש, ה'תשט"ו**

הנחה בלתי מוגה

אויפן פסוק והי' אור הלבנה כאור כחמה ואור החמה יהי' שבעתים כאור שבעת הימים (בהמאמר נתבאר אודות ענין זה) שטייט אין זוהר אויפן פסוק צאינה וראינה . . במלך שלמה בעטרה שעטרה לו אמר ביום חתונתו וביום שמחת לבו, זאגט דער זוהר אַז דאָס איז ביִומא דאיכשר למיעבד מצות, ד.ה. דעם טאָג פֿון בר מצוה, אַז אין דעם טאָג דאַרף זיין די שמחה וחדותא אַזוי ווי צו אַ חתונה.

איך ווייס ניט פאַרוואָס דאָס בריינגט זיך ניט אַראָפּ אין שו"ע, אויך דער שער הכולל וואָס בריינגט אַראָפּ אַ זוהר וועגן בר מצוה, בריינגט ער אַ אנדער זוהר וואָס ס'איז פריער מיט אַ פאַר בלעטלאַך, אַז ר"ש בן יוחאי האָט געמאַכט אַ גרויסע שמחה צום טאָג פֿון זיין זון'ס בר מצוה, ס'איז אַבער פאַראַן נאָך אַ זוהר מיט אַ פאַר בלעטלאַך שפעטער, וואָס דאַרטן רעדט ער וועגן אַלע אידן, אַז באַ אַלע אידן איז אין דעם טאָג פֿון בר מצוה דאַרף זיין אַ שמחה אַזוי ווי באַ אַ חתונה.

בא אַ חתונה דאַרפן דאָך אַלע משמח זיין דעם חתן און זיין שמח, איז אויך באַ אַ בר מצוה, איז דאָך דער חתן אַליין טרוד וועגן דער דרשה מסתמא, אַבער דער גאַנצער עולם דאַרף דאָך זיין שמח, אַז עס קומט צו נאָך אַ איד אויף דער וועלט, וואָס וועט מקיים זיין תומ"צ.

ישראל זיינען דאָך ערבים זה בזה, און בשעת עס קומט צו נאָך אַ עובד, ווערט דאָך גרינגער די אַרבעט אויף די איבעריקע, איז דאָך דאָס אַ חשבון אפי' אין גשמיות מען זאָל זיין בשמחה, מצד דעם וואָס עס קומט צו נאָך אַ עובד וואָס וועט אַרויסהעלפן אין דער אַרבעט.

(להתוועדות הי' אחד בר מצוה, וניגנו אַ פריילעכן ניגון).

**Free Translation**

*(From an informal gathering – Farbrengen –  
of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, March 19, 1955)*

On the verse (Song of Songs 3:11) "Go forth and gaze ... at King Solomon, at the crown with which his mother crowned him on the day of his wedding, and on the day of the joy of his heart," the *Zohar* (central



work of the Kabbalah) explains it to refer to “the day when one becomes qualified to practice the commandments of the Torah, which are the joy of the righteous ... at the age of thirteen. On that day,” says the *Zohar*, “it is the duty of the righteous to celebrate with joy of heart just like the day when one enters the wedding canopy.” In other words, on the day that one becomes *bar-mitzva*, he should rejoice just as at his wedding.

I don't know why this passage is not quoted in the *Shulchan Aruch* (code of Torah law). The *Shaar Hakolel* (commentary on the prayer book by Rabbi Avraham David Lavut) quotes another passage in the *Zohar*, a few pages further back, that Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai (the Sage of the Talmud whose teachings comprise the *Zohar*), made a great celebration on the day of his son's *bar-mitzva*. The *Zohar* passage quoted above, however, has the advantage of referring not only to Rabbi Shimon's son but to every Jew, that on the day of his *bar-mitzva* he should rejoice just as at his wedding.

At a wedding, **everyone** has a duty to make the bridegroom happy, and to be happy oneself. The same applies to a *bar-mitzva*. Probably, the *bar-mitzva* boy himself is concerned about his speech. But everyone else present should be happy for the additional Jew who has joined the worldwide Jewish community to observe the Torah and its commandments.

Our Sages tell us that all Jews are responsible for each other. Therefore, when another “worker” joins in, the task gets easier for everyone else. This is a reason



even on the mundane level for rejoicing at a *bar-mitzva*, because another “worker” has joined us, who will help everyone else in accomplishing our G-d-given task.



## tefillin and its significance

*By Alexander Cowen*

**T**efillin is one of the most important Mitzvot (precepts) of the Torah. It has been observed and treasured for thousands of years, right down to the present day. The Torah mentions it more than once, but most explicitly in Deut. 6:8 “You shall bind them as a sign upon your hand, and they should be for a reminder between your eyes.”

Tefillin consists of two small leather boxes attached to leather straps. The two boxes each contain four sections of the Torah inscribed on parchment. These passages cite:

(a) The Shema (Deut. 6:4-9) — pronouncing the Unity of The One G-d.

(b) Vehayah (Deut. 11:13-21) — expressing G-d’s assurance to us of reward that will follow our observance of the Torah’s precepts, and warning of retribution for disobedience to them.

(c) Kadesh (Ex. 13:1-10) — the duty of the Jewish people to always remember the redemption from Egyptian bondage.



(d) Vehayah (Ex. 13:11-16) — the obligation of every Jew to inform his children on these matters.

One of the boxes (the “hand Tefillin”) is placed upon the left arm so as to rest against the heart - the seat of the emotions, and the suspended leather strap is wound around the left hand, and around the middle finger of that hand. The other box (the “Head Tefillin”) is placed upon the head, above the forehead, so as to rest upon the cerebrum. In this manner our attention is directed to the head, heart and hand. It teaches us to dedicate ourselves to the service of G-d in all that we think, feel and do. It is also to teach us not to be governed solely by the impulse of the heart, lest that lead us into error and transgression. Nor are we to be governed by reason alone, for that may lead to harsh materialism.

Placed on the arm opposite the heart, and on the head, the Tefillin signify the submission of one’s mind, heart and actions to the Almighty, as well as the rule of intellect over emotion.

A fundamental principle of Chabad Chassidic philosophy is that the intellect must control the emotions. Unfortunately, there exists a schism between the mind and the heart. Moreover, often the emotions control the mind, and the intellect is utilized merely to provide justification, rationalization, and excuses for this “instinct-emotion centered” existence. The Mitzvah of Tefillin and its practice facilitates the attainment by the individual of unity of mind and heart, intellect and emotion.

Most of life’s regrets, sorrows and pain could be



avoided if we would but learn this important lesson - the application of head and heart to our every day problems. Besides, such wholesome balance constitutes the very first step on the road to self-assurance, courage, hopefulness and inner peace; those eternally precious soul values the Jew must develop, the better to serve G-d and mankind. Tefillin will cultivate these blessed characteristics, if observed in a spirit of true reverence.



### tefillin and the exodus from egypt

**I**t has been pointed out that the four Torah excerpts to be found in Tefillin comprise the Shema and the Vehaya, while the other two have almost exclusive reference to the Exodus from Egypt. Some may wonder why the Exodus should be assigned such signal honor as to accompany the verses that pronounce our very concept of G-d. Hence the following explanation:

There can be no question that for the Jewish people the Exodus was to be an everlasting, unforgettable "Remembrance." Our sages even went so far as to incorporate the words "In remembrance of the departure from Egypt" in the Kiddush that ushers in every Sabbath and Festival. Careful deliberation, moreover, will clearly show why they ascribed to it such singular significance.

The Exodus, it must be recalled, is the story of a people enslaved for hundreds of years by a mighty na-



tion. Although they were unarmed and overwhelmingly outnumbered, this enslaved people finally marched out to their freedom without having to resort to violence. Not only were they freed, but their departure was hastened by their erstwhile overlords, now terrified lest more plagues be meted out to them by the retributive justice of the G-d of Israel.

All available historical records disclose nothing to equal this unique event. The case of a miraculous redemption of an entire people numbering over two million souls, each of them an eyewitness to the protecting benevolence of Divine Providence. It was this event that convinced all the Jewish people, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that their faith in the G-d of their ancestors was well founded. It was the miracle of the Exodus that gave emphatic meaning to the words of the Shema: "Hear, O Israel, The L-rd is Our G-d, The L-rd is One." Note carefully how the very first commandment connects the two. "I am the L-rd your G-d Who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage."







*For your enjoyment, we have included various stories connected with one of the central Mitzvos of a Bar Mitzvah – Tefillin*

## **a pair of tefillin for sandy koufax**

*By Dovid Zaklikowski*

**O**ctober 6, 1965, the first game of the '65 World Series, the Los Angeles Dodgers versus the Minnesota Twins. It's Yom Kippur night at Metropolitan Stadium, 47,797 in attendance. Sandy Koufax, lead pitcher of the LA Dodgers, refuses to play.

Koufax's refusal to pitch on Yom Kippur gained him the respect and admiration of many Jews. His courage gave many Jews the strength to not be ashamed of their Judaism.

The day after Yom Kippur, Koufax received a visit in his S. Paul hotel room from Rabbi Moshe Feller, regional director of the Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch — the educational arm of the Lubavitcher Hasidic movement. Feller congratulated Koufax for not playing on Yom Kippur and for "the great assist he gave Rabbis and Jewish educators the world over."

Rabbi Feller also brought Sandy a pair of tefillin. "Since you bat right and throw left," he told the pitcher, "I wasn't sure what type to get you." (Tefillin are worn on the weaker arm — right-handed people wrap them around their left arm, and lefties on their right arm.) "But considering what your left arm has accomplished, I decided to get you the type you put on your right arm."



Koufax accepted the gift and thanked Rabbi Feller for visiting. “The Talmud says that tefillin is representative of all the Mitzvot of the Torah,” Feller later explained. “So I could not think of a better way to honor a person for enhancing Jewish values, than by presenting him with a pair of tefillin.”

Two weeks later, at a Simchat Torah gathering, the Lubavitcher Rebbe spoke about the Jewish pitcher who refused to play on Yom Kippur (the following is a free translation from the Yiddish). “The first condition in influencing a child,” said the Rebbe, “is that the child must see a living example by his parents. If the child sees the parent studying Torah at a time when the parent would otherwise be involved in business dealings, thereby surrendering a few dollars of profit, and perhaps causing that he won’t be written up as one of the top dealers — this is an example of self-sacrifice for the child.

“Or when the parent gives up a half hour of watching television, reading the newspaper and discussing politics... even though he thinks that knows what [President] Johnson ought to do, and if Johnson would ask him, he would tell him to do it this way.... When he renounces all of this, and he doesn’t even know what the World Series is, that’s an example for your child... (Those who don’t know what ‘World Series’ is — good for them. I wish that I didn’t know...)

“There was a young man, and in fact he had a beard, he went to see the pitcher who wouldn’t pitch on Yom Kippur and he told him that he does not play baseball on Rosh Hashanah either. The young man



told the pitcher that he would like to give him a present. He gave him a pair of tefillin. The pitcher told him that he still remembers tefillin, however, he did not want to put them at that time. The young man left, and that day the pitcher lost the game... But at the end it turned out that he won the World Series, and on his table there were the tefillin. In the end, even 'a distant individual will not be distanced' and he will merit to put them on, and another Jew will be added to those who have donned tefillin..."



### heart to heart

**T**he bearded Chassidic Jew contemplated the passenger sitting beside him on the airplane. A middle-aged man, balding slightly, and obviously Jewish. "I must try to get him to put on Tefillin," thought the Chassid. He turned to his neighbor, smiled, and tried to strike up a conversation but the attempt failed, for the Chassid, a recent immigrant to the new world, knew very few words of English. He tried Yiddish-the man looked at him blankly; he switched to German-the same result. In desperation he tried Russian-his fellow passenger just stared and shook his head.

The elderly Chassid furrowed his brow and stroked his beard in concentrated thought. Then, he reached into his suitcase and took out a small velvet bag. Under the watchful eye of his neighbor he withdrew the black leather boxes of the Tefillin. The Chassid took a



deep breath, turned to his neighbor, and mustering all his meager English vocabulary pointed his finger first at himself and then at the passenger. “I Jew, you Jew” he said. Then, pointing to the Tefillin he said, “I Tefillin, you Tefillin.” It was a call from one Jewish heart to another and a heart has no language barrier.

A few moments later the middle-aged businessman was allowing the bearded Chassid to wind the straps of the Tefillin around his arm in the middle of the crowded airplane and he was fighting back tears as he realized that he had long forgotten how to do the Mitzvah himself.

The businessman later discovered that his experience had been shared by millions of other people all over the globe as a result of the Tefillin Campaign launched by the Lubavitcher Rebbe at the time of the Six Day War in the Holy Land. A Tefillin booth has been set up by the Lubavitcher Chassidim at the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem, and more than a million Jews from all walks of life, have performed the Mitzvah of Tefillin at that booth alone. To say nothing of the daily efforts by Chassidim all over the world to re-educate their fellow Jews in the fulfillment of this vital precept of the Torah.



## hi-tech connectivity

*By Tzvi Freeman*

**T**his was back in the early sixties, when the first mainframe computers were being introduced into business. Professor Abraham Polichenco, a pio-



neer in computer technology, visited the Lubavitcher Rebbe and posed a question to him:

“I know that everything that exists in the world, even something that we discover later in history, has its source somewhere in the Torah. So, where are there computers in the Torah?”

Without hesitation, the Rebbe answered, “Tefillin.” The professor was perplexed.

“What’s new about a computer?” the Rebbe continued. “You walk into a room and you see many familiar machines: A typewriter, a large tape recorder, a television set, a hole puncher, a calculator. What is new?”

“But under the floor, cables connect all these machines so they work as one.”

The professor nodded enthusiastically. He hadn’t realized it before, but yes, this is all that a computer is: A synthesis of media and processing devices.

“Now look at your own self. You have a brain. It is in one world. Your heart is in another. And your hands often end up involved in something completely foreign to both of them. Three diverse machines.

“So you put on tefillin. First thing in the day, you connect your head, your heart and your hand with these leather cables — all to work as one with one intent. And then when you go out to meet the world, all your actions find harmony in a single coordinated purpose.”





## a telling tale

**A** lively young school boy went with his grandfather to see the Lubavitcher Rebbe one day in 1954. The purpose of the visit was to receive a blessing before his upcoming Bar Mitzvah.

He was surprised when the Rebbe asked him, in English, “which sports do you like best?”

“Baseball” the boy replied.

“Do you ever play baseball with your friends?” the Rebbe asked him.

“Yes” the boy answered.

“And do you ever see professional games?”

“Sure I do.” replied the boy.

“What’s the difference between your games and the professionals?” asked the Rebbe.

“Rabbi, when we play, it’s just ‘kids stuff,’ but the professional games are for real” answered the young boy.

The Rebbe addressed the boy with a broad smile and said “In your heart you have a big playing field. The two teams are the yetzer tov, the good inclination, and the yetzer hara, the negative drive. Until now they played ‘kids stuff,’ but from now on the game is for real!

Remember, just as in baseball, the side that plays the best will win. If you only want to, you can always overcome your yetzer hara.”

