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FREE RENDITION

מנחם מענדל שניאורסאהן
ליובאוויטש

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ברוקלין, נ. י.

By the Grace of G-d
11th of Nissan, 5728
Brooklyn, New York

To the Sons and Daughters of
Our People Israel, Everywhere

G-d bless you all

Greeting and Blessing:

Everything in the Torah, every detail, especially a detail¹ connected with such a comprehensive matter as Yetzias Mitzraim (the Liberation from Egypt), has special significance and particular instructions.

Thus the Torah tells us that before the children of Israel departed from Egypt, G-d gave them various Mitzvos: some of them to be observed while still in Egypt; others to be observed later on.

Among the Mitzvos which were given in Egypt, there is one which has the distinction of having been ordained as a special "sign" and reminder of the whole event of the Liberation from Egypt, and, moreover, was to serve as such not merely in a particular season of the year, but on every weekday² throughout the entire year.

This is the Mitzva of Tefillin.³

Hence it is clear that the connection between the Mitzva of Tefillin and the Liberation from Egypt is a very close and profound⁴ one, even compared to the festival of Pesach⁵ with all its details. For, the latter is limited to the days of Pesach. On the other hand, the remembrance and experience⁶ of the Liberation from Egypt have been ordained as a daily obligation, and similarly (each weekday of the year) also the Mitzva of Tefillin - which is a "sign (of Yetzias Mitzraim) upon thy hand and a reminder between thine eyes" ⁸.

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As in the case of all matters of Torah and Mitzvos, the special significance of the Mitzva of Tefillin has many explanations. On one of them I will dwell here.

The essential aspect of Yetzias Mitzraim is the liberation "from slavery to freedom," that is, from slavery in the ordinary sense⁹ of compulsory servitude and crushing physical labor, to the ultimate freedom from spiritual enslavement, from Mitzraim (in the sense of Metzoram, "boundaries"). In other words, freedom from all limitations and compulsions that hamper the Neshomo (soul), until the very essence of the Jew is freed and reasserted, both in the individual Jew and in the Jewish people as a whole.

And what is the very essence of a Jew? It is, as G-d has declared, "You are children unto G-d, your G-d."¹⁰ This, of course, does not refer only to the soul in its heavenly abode before her descent to earth, but also to the Jew as he is in life on this earth, namely, a soul and body together, with all their attributes.

The concept of being "G-d's children" means, among other things, that just as G-d is master and ruler over the world and all that is in it, so must the Jew - in all matters pertaining to his life as a Jew, to Yiddishkeit - rise above the material drives of this life and become their master. This mastery must not be limited to "festive occasions" of the year, but must also emphatically assert itself in his daily life, in actual and concrete form. In other words, one's Yiddishkeit must not be affected or influenced by the surrounding world; rather to the contrary, it must be the ruling and compelling force that subordinates all mundane aspects of the daily life¹¹, in every facet relating to Yiddishkeit.

Now there immediately arises a plain but fundamental question: Can this be expected of every Jew, and how is it to be accomplished?

The answer is equally plain: Inasmuch as every Jew has a "filial" kinship to G-d, G-d has bestowed upon every Jew special Divine and supra-natural capacities. -

Witness the analogy, l'havdil,¹² of children and parents, where children inherit, in a natural way, talents and character-traits of parents, and parents transmit them to children. The kinship between a Jew and his Father¹³ in Heaven is even more profound than in the analogy, as explained¹³ by the Alter Rebbe, author of the Tanya and Shulchan Aruch, in the following terms: Whereas in the analogy of children and parents, the children are separate entities, except that they are closely and intimately inter-related with their parents; in the case of the kinship between Jew and G-d, however, Jews are essentially never separated from G-d, never separate entities, since the very being of a Jew is to conform¹⁴ to, and carry out, G-d's will - in the manner of both servant and son¹⁴.

Indeed, the Liberation from Egypt has revealed and determined for all times this special quality and destiny of the Jew, as it is written: "For unto Me are the children of Israel servants; they are My servants whom I have liberated from Mitzraim."¹⁵ -

Consequently, when a Jew actually utilizes the said Divinely given capacities to the fullest degree, until they permeate his whole being, not merely his actions but also his speaking and thinking - this gives him the ability to become master and ruler over all mundane aspects surrounding his life.

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This, indeed, is an essential significance of the Mitzva of Tefillin, as explained in many sources, and in precise and succinct terms in the Shulchan Aruch¹⁶:

When a Jew puts on Tefillin¹⁷, his intent should be that G-d has commanded us to put on Tefillin on the hand, facing the heart, and on the head, facing the brain - "in order that we remember the miracles and wonders which He wrought for us..and that He has the power and dominion to rule over the upper and lower worlds according to His will. (Consequently) he should subjugate his Neshomo which is in (i.e. acts through) his brain, as well as the desires and thoughts of his heart, to the service of G-d, blessed be He."

For, the brain (intellect) and heart (emotion) are the powers that move a person in all his deeds, words and thoughts. And since "a king's servant is like (i.e. has the authority of) the king¹⁸," the Jew, by virtue of being a servant and a son of the King, becomes the vehicle through whom the Divine power and dominion is realized in the upper and lower worlds according to His will - beyond any limitation; verily Yetzias Mitzraim in the fullest measure.

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May G-d grant that through the observance of Yetzias Mitzraim in its fullest sense, both during the festival of Pesach as well as throughout the year, we should all merit the true and complete liberation from the present Golus (captivity), the Golus of the body and the Golus¹⁹ of the Neshomo, in mercy and compassion, tranquility and peace¹⁹, through our righteous Moshiach, very soon indeed.

With the blessing for a
Kosher and Happy Pesach,

/Signed: Menachem Schneerson/

P.S.

To be sure, the Mitzva of Tefillin is one of those precepts which are incumbent upon male Jews, while Jewish women are exempt from them by reason of the special nature of such Mitzvos, as explained fully in the Shulchan Aruch and elsewhere. However, the wife (and daughter) shares in these Mitzvos also, and often through her good influence and encouragement, has a very substantial share indeed. She can also participate in such Mitzvos indirectly in many ways. (See also below footnote 17).

Thus while the subject matter of this message focuses attention on the Mitzva of Tefillin, the message in all its aspects is obviously valid for all Jews, men and women alike.

- (1) ראה מכילתא ומפרשי התורה בקישור שני העניינים "אנכי ה"א אשר הוצאתיך מארץ מצרים". זח"ג קח, א. תניא פמ"ז.
- (2) להביא הלילות וגם מדרבנן לילה זמן תפלין הוא (שו"ע או"ח רס"ל).
- (3) אם נתחייבו בתפלין ב(מדבר ובמילא גם ב)טו בניסן לאחר צאתם ממצרים - ראה בכורות ה, א. סדא"ר פכ"ו. יל"ש שלח רמז תש"נ. חי' הרשב"א מנחות לד, א.
- (4) אף ש"בא לנו מצות רבות ע"ז (זכר ליצי"מ) מ"ע ומצות ל"ח" (חינוך מצות כא).
- (5) אלא שח"פ ופרטיו הם עצם ענין ותפלין וכיו"ב - אות כו' וזכר (ליצי"מ). וי"ל דחא בהא תליא. ואכ"מ.
- (6) עיין משנה פסחים (פ"י, מ"ה) חייב אדם לראות את עצמו כו' ואינו בשאר הזכירות שהובאו בשו"ע אדה"ז ס"ס ס"ד.
- (7) ראה רמב"ם הל' ק"ש פ"א ה"ג. שו"ע אדה"ז ס"ז. תניא רפמ"ז.
- (8) בא יג, ט. (9) ואדרבה דוקא זה נתחדש בפסח, כח עבודה בטלה מאבותינו בר"ה (ר"ה יא, א). (10) ראה יד, א.
- (11) כי אין הקב"ה בא בטרוניא עם בריותיו (ע"ז ג, סע"א) ואונס (מצד עניני עולם ולא שאנס עצמו בדעתו הרעה - רמב"ם הל' גירושין ספ"ב) דפטור הוא, הרי רחמנא פטרי' (נדריים כז, א), היינו שזהו מדיני המצות.
- (12) ראה עדיות פ"ב מ"ט. (13) לקו"ת דברים ד"ה שהמ"מ (סב, ד).
- (14) ראה זח"ג קיא, ב. תניא פמ"א.
- (15) בהר כה, מב. אבן עזרא שם. משא"כ מעלת בנינים (שמות ד, כב).
- (16) לרבנו הזקן חאו"ח סכ"ה סי"א. ועיין בהשינויים מל' שו"ע דהמחבר.
- (17) ונשים שפטורות (קדושין לד, א) הרי (גם לדעת המכילתא ס"פ בא וירוש' ברכות פ"ג ה"ג דפטורות מדפטורות בת"ת) הוי מ"ע שהזמן גרמא ובמצות אלו "בעשות הזכר את המצות אין מהצורך שגם הנשים תעשינה לבדה כי כבר נכללת עמו בעת שעושה אותה המצוה" (לקוטי תורה להאר"ז פ' בראשית בטעמי המצות שם. מאמרי הרשב"י - להאר"י - בפ"י על התיקונים שבתחלתו). ולהעיר מברכות (יז, סע"א) נשים במאי זכיין באקרויי כו' - בנוגע לת"ת - ועד"ז י"ל גם בתפלין כשיסרחו על בניהן וכו' (ראה פרש"י סוטה כא, א) בנוגע לתפלין. וראה בברכות (שם): גדולה הבטחה שהבטיחן הקב"ה לנשים יותר מן האנשים.
- (18) שבועות מז, ב.
- (19) ישעי' ל, טו. וראה סנה' צז, סע"ב. אור התורה לאדמו"ר הצ"צ ס"פ בא (ע' שה ואילן). המשך וככה (הגדול) בסיומו.