



The Community

Boruch Hashem

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Rabbi's Article

Becoming an 'Ish' and an 'Adam'

In our *Torah-portion* we have the source of the law that a male becoming a *Bar Mitzvah* (Man (son) of Mitzvot (obligations)) at the age of 13 (-Genesis 34:25): *And they took, two sons of Jacob, Shimon and Levi, brothers of Dina, ish (איש -a man) his sword...*" Hence (-Avot C. 5, M. 22), "*Thirteen, for the obligation to observe the mitzvot,*" because (-Maimonides, Laws of Ishut, C. 2, L. 10), "*The age of thirteen years and one day, he is considered a gadol (adult) and an ish (man).*" As the verses state (-Exodus 2:14), "*Who made you an ish (man)... over us?*" and (-Kings I 2:2), "*Be strong and show yourself an ish (man).*" Even though one may show himself *smart* at a younger age, nevertheless, prior to 13 he lacks in maturity (attachment and sensitivity) of the importance of mitzvot or lowliness.

And nevertheless, we find that the Rebbeim connected the occasions of a *Bar Mitzvah* with a teaching upon the verse (-Genesis 1:26), "*Let us make adam (אדם -man).*" Now, *adam* is a higher level than *ish*, --the difference between the title¹ *ish* and *adam* is, that while they are both referring to the intellectual capacity of the male, nevertheless, *ish* is referring to the level of intellect as it is connecting with emotions, while *adam* speaks of the intellect which is not limited to, and is above, emotions-- so, if the law states that it is enough to be a *ish* for becoming a *Bar Mitzvah*, then why are the Rebbeim connecting becoming a *Bar Mitzvah* with having to also become an *adam*? Hence, we must say, that while it is enough to be an *ish* in order to be a *Bar Mitzvah*, nevertheless, in fulfilling the mitzvot, one must also reach the feeling and influence of the level *adam*. And this itself is learned from our verse, "*And they took... an ish his sword.*"

Seemingly, we must understand: Being that a *Bar Mitzvah* is about becoming an *ish*, one who reached having his *intellect* (connected with emotions), why are we learning this law from a story that is about the overrun of full blazing *emotions* ("and they slew every male")?! Hence, we must say that we are speaking of the male obtaining a level that is *beyond ish*, but nevertheless, is precisely through which the male reaches the *completion* of the level *ish*. Which is why the Rebbeim extrapolated from this verse that it isn't enough to just reach the level of *ish* for a *Bar Mitzvah*, but rather, one must also reach the feeling of, and being influenced by, the level *adam*.

The explanation to all this is that there are two opinions concerning the, "*Thirteen, for the obligation to observe the mitzvot:*" (i) This age is extrapolated from the verse, telling us that this is the *natural* biological age of maturity. (ii) It is a "*measurement*" in the category of (Rashi's second opinion on this mishna), "*A law handed down by Moses from Mt. Sinai,*" meaning that it isn't a logical statement of *nature*, but rather, a *Heavenly Ordinance*². -- The legal difference between these two opinions is concerning the *adulthood* and its *obligations* of all *Noahide*, being that (-Maimonides, Laws of Kings, C. 9, L. 10), "*The specification of measurements only applies to Jews.*" So, according to the first opinion, in which this is simply a *natural* phenomenon, hence, also a *Noahide* is obligated in his *Seven Noahide Laws* (-[Link](#)) from the age of 13, while according to the second opinion, it now becomes an *individual* time of when this specific *Noahide* becomes mature, without a global hard measurement of 13 for all. The impact of these two opinions upon our service to G-d is: *Opinion 1* states that we must begin our service to G-d (becoming a *Bar Mitzvah*) with our *natural intellect*, learning to understand and appreciate Torah and Mitzvot. While *Opinion 2* dictates that we are to approach Torah and Mitzvot with *obedience* (*Heavenly Ordinance*). And nevertheless, also *Opinion 1* mandates that our *natural intellect* be founded upon *obedience* and *self-sacrifice*, and hence, learn out this *natural* phenomenon from the verse, "*And they took... a ish his sword.*" We find (-Deuteronomy 30:15-19), "*See, I have set before you today life and good, and death and evil... You shall choose life,*" that even the most *natural* choice to choose life over death must be based upon *G-d's commanding* us, "*You shall choose life.*"

In the category of *adam* there too exists two categories: (i) As mention earlier, the ultimate completion of *Human Intellect*, and (ii) the word *adam* (אדם) is transferable to the word *meod* (מאד -exceedingly; above and beyond; self-sacrifice). Hence, our Rebbeim are demanding of us that our *Bar Mitzvah* be of: (i) Even with our complete *intellect* (אדם -adam), that we serve with *self-sacrifice* (מאד -meod), and (ii) that our *self-sacrifice* (מאד -meod) imbue all our faculties (אדם -adam).

1. The four titles in the Scriptures for a man is *adam*, *ish*, *gever*, and *enoch* (אדם, איש, גבר, אנוש).

2. In which it is the *Heavenly Ordinance*, which creates the natural phenomenon, and not *vice versa*!

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2022 * יד' כסלו תשפ"ג
WEDDING ANNIVERSARY: [Marriage of the Rebbe](#) and the [Rebbetzin](#) 1929, in Warsaw

This Week...

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2022 * טו' כסלו תשפ"ג
Shabbat Candle Lighting: 5:12 PM · Kabbalat Shabbat: 5:30 PM

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2022 * טז' כסלו תשפ"ג
TORAH READING: [Vayishlach](#) (Genesis 32:4-36:43) · HAFTORAH: [Obadia](#) (1:1-21)
Shacharit: 9:30 AM · Mincha: 5:00 PM · Shabbat Ends: North Miami: 6:07 PM

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2022 * יט' כסלו תשפ"ג
ROSH HASHANA OF CHASSIDUS: [Rabbi Schneur Zalman](#), founder of Chabad, was [liberated from Czarist prison](#).
It is a day to add in studying the teachings of Chassidus, prayer with deeper devotion, and *farbrengen*.