



<p>בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם <i>Barukh atah Adonai, Elohaynu, melekh ha-olam,</i> Blessed are You, Lord, our God, Sovereign of the Universe,</p>
<p>אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ <i>asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav, v'tzivanu</i> who sanctifies us with his commandments, and commands us</p>
<p>לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל שַׁבָּת (אָמֵן) <i>I'had'lik neir shel shabbat (Amein)</i> to light the candles of Shabbat (Amen)</p>

I. Mitzvot in the home? (Shabbat, kashrut, mezuzot, etc)

Already of our practice	Curious to Try	Not feeling it

II. Mitzvot with our CBS community (minyan, supporting Jewish orgs, celebrating holidays, etc)

Already of our practice	Curious to Try	Not feeling it

III. Mitzvot in the broader community (tzedakah, pursuing justice, environment, service...)

Already of our practice	Curious to Try	Not feeling it

people in very many places over centuries of time. So I must study. And wrestle. And listen. And err. And rejoice. And listen.”

Mitzvah: The Torah's Active Voice

Mitzvot teach us to sanctify life. They foster altruism and self-esteem, so crucial to the life of a young Jew. They can bring Jewish families closer to the Jewish people, to all people, and to God.

Not each *mitzvah* will speak to every Jew. Ultimately, the vast majority of non-Orthodox Jews pick and choose among *mitzvot*. As the Reform leader, Rabbi Eric Yoffie, has said, “As a *mitzvah*-inspired liberal Jew, the only option that I have is to decide for myself what binds me. I will seek guidance from rabbis and teachers, but ultimately I must examine each *mitzvah* and ask the question: do I feel commanded in this instance as Moses was commanded?”

Each *mitzvah* that we do is sacred. So, too, is the idea that *what we do shapes who we are*, that the deed shapes the heart more than the heart shapes the deed. It's like sports or playing an instrument. The only way to get good at what you do is to practice.

Most Jewish parents want their children to feel Jewish and to somehow be connected to the Jewish past and the Jewish future. Judaism teaches that only through the *doing* can there be a genuine, rooted, profound feeling of Jewishness.

A Jew's actions, then, create a Jewish world. Such actions have consequences. Perhaps the most powerful Jewish idea is *kiddush hashem*, which I translate as “adding to the holiness of God's reputation.” In some contexts, *kiddush hashem* means martyrdom for the sake of one's Jewish identity and Jewish ideals. But its deeper meaning is that when Jews act admirably, when Jews act like *menschen*, their lives serve as living testaments for God. We might almost say that when we perform *mitzvot*, we become part of God's “P.R. campaign” in the world.

More than anything else, *that* is the goal of bar and bat mitzvah, and that is the goal of all Jewish life.

From Putting God on the Guest List
by Rabbi Jeffrey Salkin.

Mechina Parent Session 1 - 10/9/2022

Source Sheet by David Chapman

Bereishit Rabbah 63:10

(10) Rabbi Levi offered a parable: They [Jacob and Esau] were like a myrtle and a wild rosebush growing side by side; when they matured and blossomed, one yielded its fragrance and the other its thorns. For thirteen years both went to school and came home from school, [but] after this age, one went to the house of study and the other to idolatrous shrines. Rabbi Eleazar said: A parent is responsible for his/her child until the age of thirteen, at which point the parent must say: **“Blessed is the One who has now freed me from the responsibility of this child.”**

בראשית רבה ס"ג:י

ויגדלו הנערים - רבי לוי אמר:
משל להדס ועצבונית, שהיו
גדילים זה על גבי זה, וכיון
שהגדילו והפריחו, זה נותן ריחו
וזה חוחו. כך כל י"ג שנה,
שניהם הולכים לבית הספר,
ושניהם באים מבית הספר.
לאחר י"ג שנה, זה היה הולך
לבתי מדרשות, וזה היה הולך
לבתי עבודת כוכבים. אמר רבי
אלעזר: צריך אדם להטפל בבנו
עד י"ג שנה, מיכן ואילך צריך
שיאמר: "ברוך שפטרני מעונשו
של זה"

Avot D'Rabbi Natan 16:2

... They say that for the first thirteen years [of a person's life] the Evil Urge (*yetzer hara*) is greater than the Good Urge (*yetzer hatov*). There in their parent's womb, a person's Evil Urge grows with them. [After one emerges

אבות דרבי נתן ט"ז:ב'

יצר הרע כיצד אמרו שלש עשרה
שנה גדול יצר הרע מיצר טוב
ממעיי אמו של אדם היה גדל ובא
עמו והתחיל מחלל שבתות אין
ממחה בידו [הורג נפשות אין



into the world,] one starts breaking the Sabbath, and nothing is there to stop him... After thirteen years, the Good Urge is born. Then when he breaks the Sabbath, it says to him: Empty one! Isn't it written (Exodus 31:14), "One who breaks it will surely die"? When he kills, it says to him: Empty one! Isn't it written (Genesis 9:6), "One who spills the blood of a person, his own blood will be spilled"? When he goes out to sin, it says to him: Empty one! Isn't it written (Leviticus 20:16), "Both the adulterer and the adulteress shall be put to death"?

ממחה בידו הולך לדבר עבירה
אין ממחה בידו] לאחר י"ג שנה
נולד יצר טוב כיון שמחלל
שבתות א"ל ריקה הרי הוא אומר
(שמות ל"א:י"ד) מחלליה מות
יומת. הורג נפשות א"ל ריקה
הרי הוא אומר (בראשית ט':ו')
שופך דם האדם באדם דמו
ישפך. הולך לדבר עבירה אומר
לו ריקה הרי הוא אומר (ויקרא
כ"י) מות יומת הנואף והנואפת.

On the night of the 14th of Nisan we check for hametz with a candle, for in Nisan, renewal comes to the world. Israel becomes like a child whose yetzer hatov does not enter him until after 13 years. Similarly, we check for hametz after the 13th night by the light of a candle, on the model of a child who becomes b'nai mitzvah after 13 years. And then we must remove [literally destroy, *l'va'er*] all of the bad characteristics [of childhood]

(Sefer Ohev Yisrael—Parashat Vayetze, R. A. J. Heschel of Apta, 19th C).