

**Breslov Eikh she-Hu: Breslov The Way It Is**  
Customs and Practices, Past and Present

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Compiled and Annotated by Dovid Sears and Dovid Zeitlin

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The Breslov Center / Nachal Novea Mekor Chochma  
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*Le-'ilui nishmas Leib ben Yitzhak Ya'akov Sears, a"h*  
*Yartzeit: 30 Shevat, Rosh Chodesh Adar*

*Le-'ilui nishmas Yosef ben Shmuel Zeitlin, a"h*  
*Yartzeit: 18 Menachem Av*

## **Breslov Customs and Practices, Part I: Weekdays and Miscellaneous**

Please note that this is a work in progress, and is subject to revision

Rosh Chodesh Nisan 5767 / 2007

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### **Preface**

In response to many requests for this information, we have collected a number of *minhagim* (customs) and *hanhagos tovos* (good practices) from various branches of the Breslov community. A great deal of research has gone into this project. Initially we had intended to simply provide the few basic Breslov *minhagim* that have survived the passage of time, with all the persecutions and upheavals which the Breslover Chassidim endured, plus those that represent the branch of Breslov we are most familiar with: the Tzefas Breslov community founded by Rabbi Gedaliah Aharon Kenig (1921-1980). However, as the project developed, and we spoke with a broader spectrum of Breslover Chassidim from different quarters, our focal point changed. The final result is both a practical work and a historical one, which includes diverse and sometimes contradictory traditions, as well as *minhagim* that changed due to various outside influences. Thus, we have entitled our work “*Breslov Eikh she-Hu: Breslov The Way It Is.*” Certainly, there is a Breslov *mesorah*; however, in many details of religious life, we see from the examples cited here that it is not “etched in stone.”

Our teacher, Rabbi Elazar Mordechai Kenig, leader of the Tzefas community today, was kind enough to review this compilation as it began to take shape during the summer of 5765 / 2005, and subsequently when he visited the United States during 5766 / 2006. However, it was impossible to go over every detail. Therefore, any inadvertent errors that may have crept in are our own.

**Diverse Sources of Customs:** A number of customs and *hanhagos tovos* were established by Rabbi Nachman, *zatzal* (to whom we will refer hereafter as "the Rebbe"). In addition, *minhagim* mentioned in the Breslov literature or otherwise followed by Breslover Chassidim include some from the Baal Shem Tov, in whose family circle the Rebbe was born and raised; generic Ukrainian Chassidic *minhagim*; and customs from other places to which Breslover Chassidim eventually spread, especially Poland and Eretz Yisrael; and personal *minhagim* of various Breslov leaders. If it had not been for the massive destruction and flight of Eastern European Jewry, both as a result of the Russian Revolution and the Holocaust,

our written traditions and especially oral traditions and other “spiritual intangibles” would have been far better preserved.

Much has been lost; but with Hashem’s mercy, much has survived. Aside from what we have in writing from Reb Noson, the Rebbe’s scribe and foremost disciple, sources for the customs and traditions collected here are Breslover leaders of more recent generations, particularly Rabbi Avraham Sternhartz (1862-1955), who was Rabbi Gedaliah Kenig's teacher. Reb Avraham’s *mesorah* is represented today by the Tzefas community, as well as by the Ohr Avraham *kehillah* in Yerushalayim, founded by Rabbi Moshe Burshteyn. Another major link in the chain of Breslov tradition is Rabbi Avraham ben Nachman Chazan (1849-1917), author of *Biur ha-Likkutim*, *Kokhvei Ohr*, and other works, who is also represented here. Inevitably there are occasional discrepancies between various *mesorahs*, and even within the same *mesorah*, which we have indicated. We have also added a number of personal customs of Rabbi Gedaliah Kenig and Rabbi Elazar Kenig, which may be special interest to members of the Tzefas community, as well as personal customs of other prominent Breslover teachers, past and present.

**Si’ach Sarfei Kodesh:** One of the key sources of information about the Breslov community in pre-war Uman was Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Bender, central figure of the Yerushalayim *kehillah* for more than thirty years. The major printed anthology of his *mesorahs* is the six-volume *Si’ach Sarfei Kodesh*. However, many who knew Reb Levi Yitzchok – including Rabbi Shmuel Moshe Kramer, Rabbi Meir Carlebach, Rabbi Moshe Bienenstock, Rabbi Avraham Shimon Burshteyn, Rabbi Avraham Moshe Wasilski, Rabbi Leibel Berger, and others – claim that this work was not prepared with sufficient care and contains numerous errors. Moreover, some argue that Reb Levi Yitzchok said different things at different periods of his life, and there are certain internal contradictions in his *mesorahs* (e.g. see Rabbi Shmuel Moshe Kramer’s *haskamah* to Rabbi Chaim Kramer’s *Ba-aish u-va-Mayim*, Jerusalem 1996, which elliptically alludes to *Si’ach Sarfei Kodesh*). We are not in a position to evaluate any of this, and therefore have included many citations from *Si’ach Sarfei Kodesh*. However, whenever possible we have consulted Reb Levi Yitzchak’s *talmidim* for further corroboration.

**Breslov Approach to Minhagim:** Rabbi Nachman of Breslov was not only the leader of a close-knit *chaburah* pursuing the highest spiritual ideals, but a universal figure. He spoke to all. Therefore, the movement he began has always been more accommodating of diversity

than others. Even today, there is no pressure on those who seek to follow the Rebbe's path in *'avodas HaShem* to change personal customs such as their *nusach ha-tefillah*, nor are members of the Tzefas community obligated in any way to follow Rabbi Gedaliah Kenig's personal customs, or those of his son, Rabbi Elazar Kenig. This is particularly true of Sefardic Breslovers, of whom there are many today. During our discussions of these *minhagim*, Reb Elazar Kenig often said: "*Der ikkar darf men hobben a sakh a sakh yiras Shomayim . . .* The main thing is to be deeply G-d-fearing." All Jewish customs are holy, and one is no less of a Breslover if he keeps his family or community *minhagim* (i.e. Tzanz, Chabad, Oberland-Ashkenaz, GRA-Ashkenaz, Polish, Moroccan, Syrian, Yemenite, etc.). When we spoke with Rabbi Shimshon Barsky of Bnei Brak and others who come from families that have old Breslover *mesorahs*, they, too, reiterated this.

However, for those who would like to adopt *minhagim* that have a historical association with the Breslov community, especially *ba'alei teshuvah* who lack such family *mesorahs*, we have presented the *minhagim* of which we are aware. As we become aware of others, we will continue to update and expand this collection, with the help of HaShem. Moreover, *kehillos* must follow certain rules in order to remain stable and coherent, and in this respect the various Breslov communities are no exception. Thus, we have included many features of Breslover *kehillah* life as it is lived today, particularly in Eretz Yisrael. Some of these *kehillah* customs were imported from the Breslover enclaves of Uman, Tcherin, and Teplik, etc., while others are of more recent origin.

Since this work was designed for the Breslov Center website, we have woven together different *minhagim*, *kavanos*, general spiritual practices, and a few relevant stories, with source texts that appear in a smaller typeface below each section. However, if this work were ever to be published as a book, we would graphically separate the customs from other related material.

A final word of caution: please remember that this is an adjunct to the *Shulchan Arukh*, not a substitute for it!

### **Awakening From Sleep / Modeh Ani**

The Rebbe taught: "As soon as one awakens from sleep, as soon as he opens his eyes, he should remind himself of the World to Come."

(*Likkutei Moharan* I, 54)

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Reb Elazar Kenig explained this is in connection with "*Modeh Ani*," which one utters immediately upon awakening: "One should say '*Modeh Ani*' every morning *be-simchah*, knowing that whatever one experiences in the course of the day is set up by Divine Providence to bring him to the ultimate goal, which is called the 'World to Come.' This idea is also implied by the '*Elokai neshamah*' prayer that one recites soon afterward: 'My G-d, the soul that You have placed within me is pure. You created it . . . and You are destined to remove it from me, and to return it to me in time to come (*le-'asid lavo*).' Thus, this prayer itself is a reminder of the World to Come. There, everything attains *shleimus* – nothing is lacking, everything is good."

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The Rebbe once said: "At the beginning of every day, I surrender my every movement to G-d, as well as those of my children and all those who depend on me, beseeching that all of my actions be in keeping with G-d's will; and this is very good. Thus, I have no worries as to whether or not things go right, because I am completely dependent upon G-d. If He has something else in mind, that is what I, too, desire, since I have already asked that I only perform His will..."

(*Sichos ha-Ran* 2; *ibid.* 238, end)

## Tikkun Chatzos

The Rebbe greatly stressed the importance of reciting *Tikkun Chatzos*. He ruled that *Chatzos* begins six hours (sixty-minute hours, not *sha'os zemaniyos*) after nightfall (*tzes ha-kokhavim*), and lasts for two hours.

(*Likkutei Moharan* I, 149; *ibid.* II, 67, 101; *Sichos ha-Ran* 301; cf. *Magen Avraham, Orach Chaim* 1:4, citing the *Zohar, Vayakhel*; *ibid.* 233:1; *Machatzis ha-Shekel* on *Magen Avraham*, ad loc.; Rabbi Chaim Vital, *Pri Eitz Chaim, Sha'ar Tikkun Chatzos*, 4; *Mishnas Chassidim, Masechtas Chatzos*, 1:1; Rabbi Noson Hanover, *Sha'arei Tzion, Sha'ar 1*, citing *Eitz Chaim, Drush 6, Drushei ha-Laylah*; *Siddur ARI Kol Yaakov*, 4a; *Tzava'as ha-Rivash* 16, concerning the Baal Shem Tov; *Siddur ARI Rav Shabsai*, 5a; *Siddur ARI Rav Asher*, 9a; similarly *Bekhor Shor, Berakhos*, 3a; *Teshuvos Chasam Sofer, Orach Chaim*, no. 199; et al.)

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Rabbi Shmuel Moshe Kramer pointed out that many *seforim* say that this is the time *lechatchila*, but *bedi'eved* it can still be said until *alos ha-shachar*. This might explain how the Rebbe could tell his follower, Reb Dov, who suffered from headaches as a result of breaking his sleep, that his “personal” *chatzos* was 3:00 AM. Reb Gedaliah wrote in a letter that *chatzos* is unrelated to sleeping, and if one is still awake at that time, he should recite *Tikkun Chatzos*. (Heard from Rabbi Dovid Shapiro)

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Reb Noson explains: The first half of the night corresponds to questions that emanate from the *Chalal ha-Panui* (Vacant Space), and therefore cannot be rectified with *da'as*, but only with *emunah*. Since sleep regenerates *emunah*, we should sleep during those hours. The second half of the night, from *chatzos* and on, corresponds to those questions that emanate from the *shevirah*, and therefore can be rectified with *da'as*. Therefore, during these hours we engage in *Tikkun Chatzos* and learning Torah.

(*Likkutei Halakhos, Hashkomas ha-Boker* 3:4, based on *Likkutei Moharan* I, 62)

\*

The Rebbe taught: "While reciting *Tikkun Chatzos*, one is able to pour out one's heart to G-d, just as during *hisbodedus*. One is not only reciting this lament over the past, but even more fundamentally over what one is going through in the present. When one approaches it in this way, one can express everything in one's heart through the words of *Tikkun Chatzos*."

(*Likkutei Moharan* II, 101)

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Ideally, one should recite all the psalms and *kinnos* (laments) of *Tikkun Chatzos*. However, sometimes one cannot do so. Therefore, Reb Gedaliah advised those of his *talmidim* who did not have the strength to remain awake to say four psalms of *Tikkun Chatzos*. (Presumably this means two *Tikkun Rochel* and two from *Tikkun Leah*.) If this proves too difficult, one should say at least two psalms.

(Heard from Rabbi Chaim Man and Rabbi Eliezer Trenk. The ARI did not recite the *kinnos*, most of which were written or became popularized after his passing; see Rabbi Chaim Vital, *Sha'ar ha-Kavannos*, *Drushei ha-Laylah*, *Drush Tikkun Chatzos*. Therefore, some omit them. For a more comprehensive discussion of *Tikkun Chatzos* in English, see Rabbi Avraham Greenbaum, *The Sweetest Hour* [Breslov Research Institute, 1993]; in Hebrew, see Rabbi Binyamin Ze'ev Halevi Shisha, *Tikkun Chatzos Hamevu'ar* [Jerusalem 2001].)

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Reb Elazar Kenig added that even if one cannot say *Tikkun Chatzos* every night, one should try to do so once or twice a week. This, too, is good, because one is keeping a *keshet* with the *avodah* of *chatzos*, and not abandoning it altogether.

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On days when there is no *Tachanun*, including Shabbos, Yom Tov, Rosh Chodesh, etc., only the second half of *Tikkun Chatzos* (*Tikkun Leah*) is said, omitting Psalm 20 ("*Y'anchah*") and Psalm 51 ("*Lamenatze'ach Mizmor le-Dovid*").

(*Sha'arei Tzion*, *Sha'ar* 1, citing ARI *zal*)

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It is not customary for women to recite *Tikkun Chatzos*. However, they are permitted to do so, if they wish. In fact, the author of *Kaf ha-Chaim* declares: "A woman who is G-d-fearing and wishes to recite *Tikkun Chatzos* will be blessed."

(Cf. Rabbi Chaim Vital, *Sha'ar ha-Kavannos*, 54a, in the name of the ARI *zal*; Rabbi Yaakov Chaim Sofer, *Kaf ha-Chaim*, *Hanhagas ha-Adam ba-Boker* 15)

## **Mikveh**

The Rebbe states that the *mikveh* is a "cure for all troubles," and that it can purify one from every type of sin and impurity. He adds that it even has physical benefits, as long as the water is not too cold.

(*Likkutei Moharan* I, 56:7; *ibid.* 31:2; *ibid.* II, 123. The ARI *zal* states that immersion in a *mikveh* is necessary for one seeking *hasagas Elokus*, divine perception; see Rabbi Chaim Vital, *Sha'ar Ruach ha-Kodesh* 10b.)

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A "*Chassidisher Yid*" should immerse in the *mikveh* every day. However, in the Rebbe's time and place, this was difficult, due to adverse physical conditions. Therefore, he stated that at least one should do so on days when *Tachanun* is not said.

(*Sichos ha-Ran* 185; cf. *Likkutim Yekarim* 178, concerning the primacy of *mikveh* in the teachings of the Baal Shem Tov; Rabbi Shalom of Kaidinov, *Mishmeres Shalom* 2:2; et al.)

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Reb Noson discusses the importance of heeding *takanas Ezra* by immersing in the *mikveh* after a seminal emission.

(See *Likkutei Halakhos, Hekhsher Kelim* 4:16. When a *mikveh* is unavailable, showering under a total of nine *kabim* of water removes *tumas ker*. This takes approximately five minutes.)

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Reb Noson states: "*Dorch mikveh, hott men a tikvah . . .* Through *mikveh*, we have a hope (*tikveh*, a word-play). The *mikveh* is so called because when a person immerses himself regularly, regardless of what he may have done in the past, he may confidently hope that all of his sins and spiritual failings will be rectified."

(*Likkutei Halakhos, Choshen Mishpat* II [Vol. VIII], end, *k'sav* from Rabbi Nachman of Tulchin)

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The Rebbe taught that by immersing in the *mikveh*, one's sufferings are nullified, and deliverance comes.

(*Sefer ha-Middos, Hamtakas ha-Din, 22*)

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He also taught that by staying under the water of the *mikveh* until one can't hold one's breath any longer, one sweetens harsh judgments.

(*Sefer ha-Middos, Hamtakas ha-Din, 94*)

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Reb Gedaliah said that while one is in the *mikveh*, it is a good time to pray in thought to be rid of *midas ha-ka'as* (anger). He explained: The word "*mikveh*" is *gematria* 151, which is equal to *Shem EHYH be-milu'o* [*alef-lamed-pey-heh-heh-yod-vav-dalet-heh-heh*], associated with the Thirteen Divine Attributes of Mercy. This, in turn, is equivalent to the word "*ka'as*" [150], with one added for the "*kollel*" [151]. Thus, *mikveh* is a *tikkun* for *midas ha-ka'as*.

(Heard from Rabbi Dovid Shapiro)

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Once when Reb Elazar was severely ill and could not go to the *mikveh*, he asked one of the *chaverim* to read one of the Rebbe's stories aloud. He remarked, "*Itzter toivel Ich zich in Sippurei Ma'asiyos . . . Now I immerse myself in the Sippurei Ma'asiyos.*"

(Heard from Rabbi Dovid Zeitlin)

### Praying Early

The Rebbe taught that one should *daven* early in the morning.

(*Sichos ha-Ran* 31. This was the prevailing attitude during the first generations of the Chassidic movement; e.g. see *Tzava'as ha-Rivash* 16, concerning the Baal Shem Tov, and *Imrei Pinchas* 389, concerning Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz. In general, the Rebbe encouraged us to not postpone *davenning*, but to attend to all the *tefillos* as soon as possible.)

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Thus, for generations many Breslover Chassidim have been accustomed to *daven "ki-vasikin,"* like the early pietists who recited the *Shemoneh Esreh* at sunrise, which the Gemara deems the ideal time to pray (*Berakhos* 9b). This is brought as a matter of *halakhah* in *Shulchan Arukh*, as well. Reb Noson regularly *davenned ki-vasikin*, and encouraged his son, Reb Yitzchok, to do so, as may be seen in his letters.

(See *Shulchan Arukh, Orach Chaim* 89:1. One such letter from Reb Noson to Reb Yitzchok appears in *'Alim li-Terufah* [Toras Ha-Netzach ed. 2000], 25. He also *darshans* on the concept of “awakening the dawn” by arising while it is still dark in *Likkutei Halakhos, Hashkomas ha-Boker* 3:4, et passim. Praying *ki-vasikin* is particularly stressed by the kabbalists; e.g. Rabbi Yaakov Tzemach, *Nagid u-Metzaveh*, s.v. *'inyan tefilah de-vasikin*, p. 24, et al.)

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When in his old age, Rabbi Avraham Sternhartz came to the Kataman neighborhood of Yerushalayim, there was no *vasikin minyan*. Therefore, he exerted himself greatly to establish such a *minyan* until he succeeded.

(Heard from Rabbi Avraham Shimon Burshteyn, in the name of his grandfather, Rabbi Moshe Burshteyn)

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The Tcheriner Rov used to *daven ki-vasikin be-yechidus* during the week, and then he would join the *minyan* in *shul*. This might have been because he *davenned* at length and did not wish to conform to a *minyan* of *baalebatim*, who *davenned* more quickly.

(Heard from Rabbi Avraham Shimon Burshteyn)

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Rabbi Nachman Burshteyn saw that Reb Avraham used to start *davenning* as much as forty-five minutes before *ha-netz ha-chamah*, and never looked at the clock – he simply looked at the sky and knew when to begin. Yet somehow, he always reached the *Shemoneh Esreh* within a minute or two of the *netz*.

(Heard from Rabbi Avraham Shimon Burshteyn)

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Like Reb Avraham, his teacher, Reb Gedaliah did not approve of watching the clock during *davenning*, in order to begin the *Shemoneh Esreh* on the very minute of *ha-netz ha-chamah*. Rather, he stated that one may begin as much as ten minutes earlier or later, and this is nevertheless called *ki-vasikin*.

(We have heard in the name of Rabbi David Daniel Cohen, Rosh Yeshivah Sha'arei Kedushah U-Tefilah of Yerushalayim, about an exchange between the Shemen Sason and the Baal ha-Sadeh, Rav Shaul Dwek Ha-kohen. The latter said: “*Ani ‘eved Hashem, lo ‘eved ha-shemesh.*” We heard a similar statement in the name of the late Sefardic kabbalist, Rav Yitzchak Kaduri of Jerusalem. The Chazon Ish also *davenned ki-vasikin* without looking at a clock after beginning the service.)

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Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Bender attested that the *‘ovdim* in Uman did not watch the clock, either. (*Si’ach Sarfei Kodesh* IV, 144.)

\*

Reb Elazar Kenig explained that one should *daven* with fiery enthusiasm (*hislahavus*) and yearning. This is true prayer. Therefore, it cannot be so narrowly regulated, but must vary from day to day, and from individual to individual.

(This reflects the rule of Chazal: “*Ha-‘oseh tefilaso keva’, ein tefilaso tachanunim*”; *Berakhos* 28a).

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It is customary for Breslover Chassidim to *daven ki-vasikin* on five occasions in particular: Purim, Shevi'i Shel Pesach, Shavuos (First Day), Tisha be-Av, and Hoshanah Rabbah. On Shavuos and Hoshanah Rabbah, ideally one does so after remaining awake all night.  
(Oral tradition)

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The Rebbe did not approve of drinking coffee or tea before *shacharis*. He personally did not even drink water before praying in the morning. This has become common practice among Breslover Chassidim.

(*Sichos ha-Ran* 277; *Si'ach Sarfei Kodesh* IV, 504; cf. *Zohar* II, 215b, III, 141b; *Shulchan Arukh, Orach Chaim* 89:3, 4; *Be'er Heitiv, Orach Chaim* 89:11; also *Si'ach Sarfei Kodesh* II, 1-57, in the name of the Baal Shem Tov. Nevertheless, Reb Noson acknowledges that drinking water is permitted according to *halakhah*; see *Likkutei Halakhos, Birkos ha-Shachar* 3:5. According to most authorities, even tea or coffee is permitted if one is weak. Certainly this applies to a person with health problems, who is even permitted to eat, as stated in *Shulchan Arukh*.)

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The Rebbe stated that one should not be overly concerned with the requirement to go to the bathroom before *davenning*, but one may rely upon the ruling of the RIF (*Berakhos* 14b) that it is enough if one feels capable of walking one *parsah* (a little less than a mile) without attending one's needs. Thus, one will not delay his prayer unnecessarily.

(*Sichos ha-Ran* 30; *Chayei Moharan* 52; cf. *Shulchan Arukh, Orach Chaim* 92)

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He also said of certain Chassidic leaders of his day, "The *tzaddikim* are making a mistake by praying after the *z'man tefillah*."

(*Chayei Moharan* 487; cf. *Shulchan Arukh, Orach Chaim* 89:1. Many of these Chassidic masters made lengthy spiritual and physical preparations and then *davenned* at great length, causing

them to miss the *z'man tefillah*. Therefore, this applies all the more so to those of us who are delayed by oversleeping, or by procrastinating before coming to *shul*.)

### **Hiskashrus / Binding Oneself to the Tzaddik and to Klal Yisrael**

The Rebbe told his followers that it is beneficial to declare before *davenning*: "I hereby bind myself to all the *tzaddikim* of the generation."

(*Likkutei Moharan* I, 2:6, 9:4; *Sichos ha-Ran* 296. Similarly, in many Chassidic circles such declarations and *kavannos* have not been uncommon. For example, see Rabbi Meshullam Feivish of Zabarazh, *Yosher Divrei Emes* II, 33; Rabbi Yechiel Michel of Zlotchov, *Toras ha-Maggid mi-Zlotchov, Tefillah* 3, p. 320; Rabbi Menachem Nochum of Chernobyl, *Me'or Einayim, Beshalach* [end], in the name of the Baal Shem Tov; *ibid. Yismach Lev, Berakhos* 2 [end]; Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz, *Imrei Pinchas* [Bnei Brak 2003], *Sha'ar Parshiyos u-Moadim, Elul*, 424; Rabbi Chaim of Chernowitz, *Be'er Mayim Chaim, Vayetzei* (s.v. *vayachalom*); Rabbi Chanokh Henikh of Alesk, *Lev Same'ach, Hakdamas ha-Mechaber le-Derekh ha-Tefillah*; Rabbi Aryeh Leib Tzintz, *Kometz ha-Minchah, Vayikra*; Rabbi Yerachmiel Yisrael Yitzchak of Alexander, *Yismach Yisrael, Be-ha'alosekha*; Rabbi Yaakov Yitzchak of Lendov, *Emes le-Ya'akov, Bereshis*; Rabbi Shaul Brakh of Kashau, *Giv'as Shaul, Va-eschanan*; Rabbi Eliezer Zusia Portugal of Skulen, *Kedushas Eliezer, Tzava'ah* 4, *Minhagim Tovim*; et al.)

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This is because the *tzaddikim* elevate the prayers of the entire Jewish people, conveying each prayer to its proper heavenly gate.

(*Likkutei Moharan* I, 9:3)

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Therefore, it has become customary for Breslover Chassidim to recite the following verbal formula before each prayer service (as well as before performing any *mitzvah* or religious practice, such as immersing in a *mikveh*, studying Torah, lighting the Chanukah Menorah, etc.):

**Hebrew:** *Hareini mekasher 'atzmi le-khol ha-tzaddikim amitiyim she-be-doreinu, u-lekhol ha-tzaddikim amitiyim shochnei afar, kedoshim asher ba-aretz hemah, u-be-frat Rabbenu ha-Kadosh, ha-Nachal Novea Mekor Chokhmah, Rebbe Nachman ben Feige – zekhusam yagen 'aleinu ve-'al kol Yisrael, amen.*

**English:** I hereby bind myself to all of the true *tzaddikim* of our generation, and to all true *tzaddikim* who rest in the dust, "holy ones who are interred in the earth" (Psalms 16:3), and in particular our holy master, the "flowing brook, source of wisdom" (Proverbs 18:4), Rabbi Nachman ben Feige – may their merits shield us, *amen*.

The reference to those who “rest in the dust” is based on *Likkutei Moharan* 65:5.

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Alternatively, Reb Gedaliah Kenig writes in his letters that his teacher, Rabbi Avraham Sternhartz, used to mention the names of the following preeminent *tzaddikim* (although this was not written as a precise formula):

*"...u-be-frat Moshe Rabbeinu, 'alav ha-sholom; ha-Tanna Eloki Rebbe Shimon Bar Yochai, Rosh Kol B'nei ha-Golah, Rebbe Yitzchok Luria Ashkenazi; Ish Elokim, Kodesh ha-Kodoshim, ha-Baal Shem Tov; Pe'er ha-Dor, Rebbe Levi Yitzchak mi-Berditchev; Ohr ha-Oros, ha-Nachal Novea Mekor Chokhmah, Rebbe Nachman ben Feiga mi-Breslev, al da'as talmido ha-kadosh, Admor Moreinu Reb Noson ben Naftali Hertz; im Ru'ach Apeinu Moshiach HaShem, Moshiach ben Dovid – zekhusam yagen 'aleimu ve-'al kol Yisrael, amen."*

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It is customary to mention the Rebbe's name together with his mother's name, "Rabbi Nachman ben Feige." There is an oral tradition that this was his express wish. However, some Breslovers say "Rabbi Nachman ben Simchah / ben Feige."

(The latter custom is mentioned in *Si'ach Sarfei Kodesh* IV, 146. Reb Noson alludes to a reason for our using the Rebbe's mother's name in *Likkutei Halakhos, Birkhas ha-Shachar* 3:26.)

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In Uman the *nusach* of “*Hareini mekasher...*” was not posted on the wall of the *shul* or near the *tziyun*. Doing so was an innovation of the Polish Breslovers. They wanted to institute this *minhag* in Uman, but the *zekanim* did not allow it. In Yerushalayim, some wished to do so, but Reb Levi Yitzchok was very much against it. At one point it was posted on the wall of the *shul* in Me’ah She’arim, but subsequently it was removed and never replaced.  
(Heard from Rabbi Avraham Shimon Burshteyn)

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“*Hareini mekasher*” is not posted on the wall of the Breslover *shul* in Tzefat.

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However, it is posted on the wall of the Breslover *shtieblach* in Williamsburg and Borough Park.

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The Rebbe also instructed us to follow the custom of the Ari *zal* by stating prior to *davenning*: “*Hareini mekabel 'alai mitzvas 'asei shel ve-ahavta le-re'akha kamokha* – Behold, I accept upon myself the positive commandment to 'love your fellow Jew as yourself.' ” Thus, one becomes united with all of Klal Yisrael. He also explained: “Through love and peace, it is possible to speak words of prayer. This is because speech is essentially bound up with peace, as it is written, 'I shall speak of peace...' (Psalms 122:8).”

(*Likkutei Moharan* I, 239; cf. *Pri Eitz Chaim*, *Sha'ar 'Olam ha-'Asiyah* 1:3:2; *Sha'ar ha-Kavannos*, *Inyan Birkhas ha-Shachar*, beginning. Re. the essential unity of all Jewish souls, e.g. see Rabbi Moshe Cordovero, *Tomer Devorah*, chap. 1, s.v. “*le-she'aris nachalaso*.” This is also one of the foundations of the *derekh ha-Baal Shem Tov*, as discussed in *Toldos Ya'akov Yosef*, *Kedoshim*, et al. The Rebbe states this, as well; e.g. *Likkutei Moharan* I, 260.)

\*

Reb Elazar Kenig has said that one should make this declaration prior to each of the three daily prayer services.



### **Tzedakah Before and During Shacharis**

The Rebbe stated that giving *tzedakah* brings a spirit of peace and love into the world in abundant measure.

(*Likkutei Moharan* I, 57:7, 67, et passim.)

\*

He also taught: "One should give charity before praying in order to be saved from foreign thoughts. Thus one will *daven* properly, without veering to the right or left (i.e. toward *chesed* or *gevurah*). Rather, one will prepare his words with balance (*mishpat*, the principle that intervenes between *chesed* and *gevurah*)."

(*Likkutei Moharan* I, 2; cf. *Shulchan Arukh, Orach Chaim* 92:10)

\*

In *Sefer ha-Middos*, he states that before *davenning*, one should give *tzedakah* and bind himself to the *tzaddikim* of the generation.

(*Sefer ha-Middos, "Tefillah"* I, 33)

\*

When one reaches the words in *Pesukei de-Zimra*, '*Vi-ha-'osher vi-ha-kavod mil'fanekha, ve-atah moshel ba-kol . . . Wealth and honor are before You, and You rule over all,*' one should again give a coin to *tzedakah* in order to internalize the spirit of charity. (This custom does not originate with Breslov, but is mentioned in the *Shulchan Arukh* and elsewhere.)

(*Likkutei Moharan* I, 67:7; cf. *Likkutei Halakhos, Choshen Mishpat, Aveidah u-Metziah* 3:3; cf. *Shulchan Arukh, Orach Chaim* 92:10; *Sha'ar ha-Kavannos, 'Inyan Tefilas ha-Shachar*. Rabbi Chaim Vital states in the name of the ARI *zal* that one should give three coins of any denomination, first two separately, and then the third. Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz states that if all Jews would give *tzedakah* at this point in *Shacharis*, Moshiach would surely come; *Imrei Pinchos* [Bnei Brak 2003] vol. I, *Sha'ar Seder ha-Yom* 79.)

\*

The Rebbe encouraged his followers to give *tzedakah* "with both hands," adding that when one does so, his prayer will be heard above. Reb Gedaliah Kenig understood this simply to mean that we should give generously. However, because of this remark, many Breslover Chassidim are accustomed to actually hold the money they are giving with both hands.

(See *Sefer ha-Middos*, "Tefillah" I, 45; "Tzedakah" I, 27)

### **Tzitzis / Talis**

The Rebbe once gave his old *talis* to one of his close followers (according to oral tradition, this was Reb Yudel). He said, "Be careful to honor this *talis*. For every thread in this *talis* I shed a tear, until I understood the true meaning of a *talis*." (In kabbalistic works, the *talis* is related to the *Ohr Ein Sof* / Infinite Light.)

(*Sichos ha-Ran* 172; cf. 'Olas Tamid, 'Nyan Tzitzis, 19b; *Sha'ar ha-Kavannos, Drushei ha-Tzitzis, Drush* 2, beginning; et al.)

\*

Many Ukrainian and Russian Chassidim wore *tzitzis* tied with *chulyos* (clusters of three ringlets between the five double-knots). This had also been customary in Breslov; however over the years, it began to fall into neglect. Reb Gedaliah reintroduced this *minhag* to his *talmidim*, winding the *chulyos* so that the lead string ("*shammes*"), which separates the clusters, was hidden. This method has become widespread in the Breslov community today.

(This custom is supported by the fact that Rabbi Nachman expounds on the number of strings, knots, and *chulyos* of the *tzitzis* in *Likkutei Moharan* I, 7 (end). Reb Noson discusses *chulyos* in *Likkutei Halakhos, Tzitzis* 1; *ibid.* 3:22; *ibid.* 7:4, et passim. This is a *minhag* of the ARI *zal*; see Rabbi Chaim Vital, *Sha'ar ha-Kavannos, Drushei Tzitzis, Drush* 6. It is also mentioned in *Zohar* III, 228b; *Tikkunei Zohar, Tikkun* 18. Cf. *Imrei Pinchos* [Bnei Brak 2003] vol. I, *Sha'ar Seder ha-Yom* 17; *Sefer Minhagim Chabad, "Tzitzis"*; etc.)

\*

Reb Elazar Kenig has instructed his *talmidim* to wear their *arba'ah kanfos* (or "*talis katan*") so that the two front corners lie toward the front of the body, and the two back corners lie toward the back of the body, causing the *tzitzis* to be somewhat separated from each other – as opposed to being grouped together in the middle of each leg, one bundle on the right, and one on the left. That is, if one were to visualize the body from above as a rectangle, the *tzitzis* would fall near the four corners. This happens naturally if one wears the *arba'ah kanfos* over his shirt; however, if one wears it under his shirt, he must adjust the *tzitzis* more carefully.

\*

Reb Gedaliah wore the *arba'ah kanfos* over his shirt. However, there are different interpretations as to what the ARI *zal* meant in saying that the *arba'ah kanfos* should be "*tachas beged ha-'elyon*." Some understand "*beged ha-'elyon*" to mean one's shirt, while others take it to mean one's jacket or *caftan*. Thus, some Breslovers follow the former view, and some follow the latter. For those who work in the secular world, there are practical considerations, too. Like his father, Reb Elazar wears the *arba'ah kanfos* over his shirt.

(See Rabbi Chaim Vital, *Sha'ar ha-Kavannos, Drushei ha-Tzitzis, Drush 6. Magen Avraham, Orach Chaim 9:13*, understands this to mean that the *talis katan* should be worn over one's shirt. Similarly, *Ohr Tzaddikim 7:9-11*. As for those who do not do so, *Mishnah Berurah*, ad locum, states that it is improper to tuck the *tzitzis* into one's pants; rather one should wear them so that they are visible.)

\*

Reb Gedaliah wore a large wool *arba'ah kanfos* with a round opening for the neck, without a slit. This is Reb Elazar's *minhag*, as well. This seems to reflect the *shittah* of the *Baal ha-Tanya* that the garment is measured from the bottom of the slit, thus compromising the *shiur*. However, it may be simply a *hiddur*. Skverer Chassidim also wear an *arba'ah kanfos* with a round neck (as well as *tzitzis* with *chulyos*).

(*Siddur Baal ha-Tanya, Dinei Tzitzis*, beginning; *Piskei Dinim Tzemach Tzedek, Orach Chaim 2:3*. The Baal ha-Tanya states that the minimal *shiur* is one *amah* by one *amah*, i.e. 48 cm. X 48 cm, and does not include the hole in the middle; see *Mishnah Berurah 16, s.k. 4*, in the name of *Artzos ha-Chaim*, that this *shiur* is the custom of "*anshei ma'aseh*," i.e. the devout. However, some *poskim* require even larger *shiurim*; e.g. the Chazon Ish requires the *beged* to be at least 58 cm. X 58 cm. For a detailed summary, see Rabbi Zvi Cohen, *Tzitzis: Halakhah Pesuka* [Jerusalem: Ohel Yosef 1993], "*Shiur Talis*" 16:2, ff. 4-6. The Baal ha-Tanya also stipulates that one's chest be covered by the *arba'ah kanfos*, in keeping with the view of the ARI *zal*. This is another reason why there should not be a slit; see *Siddur*, idem, rulings from which are also appended to *Shulchan Arukh HaRav*, vol. I, *Hosafos: Hilkhos Tzitzis*, beginning.)

\*

Each corner of the *arba'ah kanfos* should have two horizontal holes in the form of a *tzeyre*, following the view of the ARI *zal*. This seems to be a universal Chassidic *minhag*.

(Rabbi Chaim Vital, *Pri Eitz Chaim, Sha'ar ha-Tzitzis*, citing *Baal ha-Ittur*, also see BaCH on *Orach Chaim* 11; Rabbi Moshe of Dalina, *Seraf Pri Eitz Chaim, Sha'ar ha-Tzitzis*, 5, with commentary *Shivchei ha-Pardes*, ff. 78, in the name of the Baal Shem Tov; Rabbi Chaim Elazar Spira of Munkatch, *Darkhei Chaim vi-Shalom, Tzitzis*, 40; *Likkutei MaHaRiCH*, vol. I, pp. 20-21.)

\*

Reb Noson mentions that one should disentangle the strings of the *tzitzis* before putting on the *arba'ah kanfos* or *talis gadol*, and check to make sure that they are kosher.

(See *Shulchan Arukh, Orach Chaim* 8:7, 9. Reb Noson discusses this concept in *Likkutei Halakhos, Tzitzis* 4. The ARI *zal* states that the word “*tzitzis*” is an acronym for “*tzaddik yafrid tzitziyosav tamid . . . a righteous man separates his tzitzis constantly.*” Rabbi Meir Poppers, *Ohr Tzaddikim*, 7:3, 4, explains that the thirty-two strings represent *lamed-beis nesivos chokhmah*, thirty-two distinct spiritual channels.)

\*

Some recite the *berakhah* over the *talis gadol* “*le-hisatef ba-tzitzis*” with a *patach* under the *beis*; others say “*le-hisatef bi-tzitzis*,” with a *sheva* under the *beis*. Reb Elazar stated that he did not receive any *mesorah* on this.

(See *Shulchan Arukh, Orach Chaim* 8:5. *Be'er Heitiv*, ad loc., cites the *BaCH* in support of “*ba-tzitzis*” with a *kametz*; similarly, *Shulchan Arukh ha-Rav Baal ha-Tanya, Hil. Tzitzis* 8:2; *Siddur Rav Shabsai Sofer, Kesser Nehora*, and *Siddur Heikhal ha-Berakhah–Komarno*. However, *Beis Yosef* rules in favor of the *sheva*, in keeping with the *Levush, Sefer Knesses ha-Gadol*, and *'Olas Tamid*. *Sha'arei Teshuvah* cites Rabbi Moshe Zacutto that the *sheva* also reflects the view of the Kabbalah; similarly, *Siddur Tefillas Yesharim–Ben Ish Chai*. Most Ashkenazim follow the first view, while most Sefardim follow the latter.)

\*

Rabbi Dovid Shapiro recalled that once Reb Gedaliah and a few *talmidim* were learning a section of *Likkutei Halakhos*, which states that the *tzitzis* impart *kedushah* to the entire *begeh*.

Reb Dovid remarked that this seems to contradict the Ba'al ha-Tanya, who writes in his *Siddur* (in contrast to his *Shulchan Arukh ha-Rav*) that the conclusion of the *berakhah* should be “*bi-tzitzis*,” and not “*ba-tzitzis*.” The reason the Baal ha-Tanya gives is because “*ba-tzitzis*” (“in the *tzitzis*”) implies that we are enwrapped in the *tzitzis* themselves, while “*bi-tzitzis*” (“in *tzitzis*”) implies that we are enwrapped in a garment with *tzitzis*. However, according to Reb Noson the entire garment receives the holiness of the *tzitzis*, so we are truly wrapped “in the *tzitzis*.” Reb Gedaliah agreed with this reasoning, and said that we should conclude the *berakhah* “*ba-tzitzis*.”

(Heard from Rabbi Dovid Shapiro. Cf. *Shulchan Arukh ha-Rav Baal ha-Tanya* (Revised Edition, Brooklyn: Kehot 2001), *Orach Chaim, Piskei ha-Siddur*, p. 615; *Sha'ar ha-Kollel* 82:5.)

\*

According to the prevailing custom, the *berakhah* over the *talis gadol* retroactively exempts the *talis katan*. However, those who do not wear a *talis gadol* should recite the *berakhah* “*al mitzvas tzitzis*” over the *talis katan*.

(See *Shulchan Arukh, Orach Chaim* 8:3, 6, that one should recite the *berakhah* “*al mitzvas tzitzis*” over the *talis katan* if one dons it without *atifah*. The ARI *zal* performed ‘*atifa ha-rosh*’ with the *talis katan* and recited the *berakhah* “*le-hisatef ba-tzitzis*,” as stated in *Sha'ar ha-Kavannos, Inyan ha-Tzitzis, Drush* 6. Nevertheless, the *Mishnah Berurah* [ad loc., s.k. 24, 30] rules that if one plans to wear a *talis gadol*, it is preferable to conduct oneself as stated above.)

\*

Reb Elazar first holds the *talis* slightly over his head in preparation to wrap himself in it; he recites the *berakhah*; covers his upper body and head to the level of the mouth; then gathers all four corners of the *talis* in front of him with both hands; and casts it in an upward motion, first over his left shoulder and then over his right shoulder. Most Chassidim perform the ‘*atifah*’ this way, with minor variations, although some only cover the head to the level of the eyes. The common *minhag* is to recite “*Mah yakar chasdekha Elokim... Yirviyun mi-deshen beisekha... Ki imkha mekor chaim... Mishokh chasdekha le-yod'ekha...*” while enwrapped in the *talis*. The Rebbe *darshans* on these verses in *Likkutei Moharan* I, 54, in context of this *mitzvah*. (The Geonim state that the method of wrapping the *talis* should be “*ki-atifa Yishmaelim*.” “However, there are different opinions about what this means. For two methods of ‘*atifah*’

see *Ta'amei Ha-mitzvos, Kuntres Tziyurim le-Limud*, pp. 606-607, 611-613, with diagrams. The former is the more common, while the latter is the method of Chabad. Rabbi Chaim Vital, *Sha'ar ha-Kavannos, 'Nyan ha-Tzitzis, Drush 1*, states that the ARI *zal* performed the 'atifah by casting the two right *tzitzis* over his left shoulder. He goes on to explain that this is in order to rectify the *Nukva*, which corresponds to the back of *Ze'er Anpin* via the left side (ibid. *Drush 2*). Emulating the ARI *zal*, many Sefardic kabbalists first wrap the *talis* around the head and neck, pause *keday hilukh dalet amos*, and only then cover *rov ha-guf*; see *Ben Ish Chai: Halakhos I, Bereishis 5; Shalmei Tzibbur, Dinei Tzitzis*, p. 79. The Shem Shlomo of Munkatch did not cover his eyes with the *talis* before the 'atifah, as the Minchas Elazar states in *Darkei Chaim ve-Shalom 34*. The *minhag* of Chabad is that prior to enwrapping oneself, the *talis* covers the forehead, and one is not particular that it cover the eyes. Then one casts the two right *tzitzis* over the left shoulder, holding the two left *tzitzis* at the level of the chest.)

\*

Reb Gedaliah wore the *talis* over the *tefilah shel rosh*, in keeping with the custom of the ARI *zal*, although he did not do so throughout the *davening*.  
(Heard from Rabbi Elazar Kenig; see *Sha'ar ha-Kavannos, Drushei Tzitzis, Drush 6*, beginning)

\*

However, Reb Avraham Sternhartz mentions that Reb Noson wore the *talis* over his head for the entire *davening*.  
(*Tovos Zichronos*, toward the end. We are grateful to Rabbi Dovid Shapiro for this reference.)

\*

Reb Gedaliah's *talmidim* remember that he usually wore his *talis* draped over his shoulders and extending to his wrists, not folded over his shoulders – although if he did so *be-shittah* still remains uncertain. This was the custom of many Chassidim in the Ukraine and surrounding regions, including those of Chernobyl, Skver, and Karlin-Stolin. However, Reb Elazar Kenig wears his *talis* folded over his shoulders, and lets it fall down to his sides before *Kriyas Shema'*. He continues to wear the *talis* in this manner at least until after *Shemoneh Esreh*.

(See Rabbi Chaim Vital, *Sha'ar ha-Kavannos*, 'Inyan "Yotzer Ohr" [Ashlag ed. p. 119a], that one should do so when one reaches the words "*maher vi-havei 'aleinu berakhah vi-shalom meherah me-arba' kanfos ha-aretz*"; also cf. *Darkei Chaim ve-Shalom* [Munkatch] 141. The *ARI zal* also describes the differences between those whose *shoresh neshamah* is Kayin or Hevel. Those who are from *shoresh Kayin* should wear the *talis* folded over their shoulders, whereas those who are from *shoresh Hevel* should wear it draped over their arms. See Rabbi Moshe of Dalina, *Seraf Pri Eitz Chaim*, *Sha'ar Kriyas Shema' 2*, esp. in the commentary *Shivchey ha-Pardes*, ff. 16, citing Rabbi Chaim Vital, *Sha'ar ha-Gilgulim*, *Hakdamah* 36.)

\*

The Rebbe wore a silver *'atarah* on his *talis* (which is in a private Judaica collection). However, it seems that historically, Breslover Chassidim did not. This was probably due to poverty, rather than to any *shittah* to the contrary. Over the years, it became the custom in Breslover communities, especially in Eretz Yisrael, to wear only the white cloth strip that most *talesim* come with. (For those who wish to wear an *'atarah*, the *minhag* in the Ukraine was to wear a *gefluchtener 'atarah*, i.e. one that is woven with silver threads to form various designs. This is still customary in the communities of Chernobyl, Skver, and Rizhin, which come from the same region.)

### **Techeles / The Blue Thread**

When the *'inyan* of *techeles* began to be debated during the late 1800s, due to the efforts of Rabbi Gershon Henich Leiner, the Radzyner Rebbe, to restore this *mitzvah*, Rabbi Nachman Goldstein, the Tcheriner Rov, took the opposing view. He argued that the Rebbe states in *Likkutei Moharan* I, 7, that *tzitzis* today are white. Reb Noson reiterates this in *Likkutei Halakhos*, where he relates the wearing of *techeles* to the Final Redemption. Reb Avraham Sternhartz also rejected wearing *techeles bi-zman ha-zeh*, as did another prominent descendant of Reb Noson, Reb Michel Sternhartz (son of Reb Yitzchak, to whom most of the letters in *'Alim le-Terufah* are written).

(Cf. *Si'ach Sarfei Kodesh* III, 338. As for the connections Reb Noson makes between *techeiles* and *le-asid lavo*, see *Likkutei Halakhos*, *Netilas Yadayim Shacharis* 4:12; *ibid.* *Tzitzis* 1:1; *ibid.* *Tzitzis* 5:7. There are other *mekoros*, as well.)

\*

Reb Gedaliah Kenig said in the name of Reb Avraham Sternhartz that the premature restoration of this custom could bring harsh judgments upon the world, since the blue thread is kabbalistically bound up with the forces of *din*.

(Heard from Rabbi Elazar Kenig. See *Likkutei Moharan* I, 49:7, citing *Zohar* III, 152a).

\*

Reb Gedaliah did not believe that the Radzyner *techeles* is authentic, but he contended that even if we had the true *techeles*, it would still be a *sakanah*.

(Heard from Rabbi Dovid Shapiro)

\*

However, Reb Gedaliah once said that if one possessed impeccable *yiras Shomayim* – perfect fear of Heaven – he could wear *techeiles*. (This remark also suggests why the *mitzvah* of *techeiles* may have been lost.)

(Heard from Rabbi Elazar Kenig)

\*

Reb Avraham b'Reb Nachman Chazan, author of *Biur ha-Likkutim* on *Likkutei Moharan* and other *seforim*, accepted the Radzyner *techeles*. Some say that he did so based on secret traditions from the Rebbe's *Megillas Sesarim* ("Hidden Scroll").

(*Si'ach Sarfei Kodesh* III, 559)

\*

Therefore, today some Breslover Chassidim wear the *techeles*, while others do not. Moreover, there are differences between the Radzyner *techeles* and the *techeles* dyes developed more recently in Eretz Yisrael. One is made from the murex, the other from the jenthina, each *shittah* having its own advocates and critics. The custom of the Tzefas Breslover community is not to wear *techeles*, although we all hope to do so with the coming of Moshiach Tzidkeinu, speedily in our days.

## Tefillin

The Rebbe instructed his followers to don Tefillin of Rashi and Tefillin of Rabbenu Tam every day. Reb Noson expounds on this in *Likkutei Halakhos*.

(*Si'ach Sarfei Kodesh* IV, 194; *Likkutei Halakhos, Tefillin* 5:27-32; *ibid.* 6:16; also see *Shulchan Arukh, Orach Chaim* 34:1-2; *Pri Eitz Chaim, Sha'ar ha-Tefillin*, 9. The differences between the *shittos* of Rashi and Rabbenu Tam, as well as Shemusha Raba and Ra'avad, are presented with diagrams in Rabbi Avraham Yitzchok Sperling's *Ta'amei ha-Mitzvos*, p. 19)

\*

Reb Elazar once remarked that wearing the Tefillin of Rabbenu Tam is also a *shemirah*, a way of evoking heavenly protection. This reflects Reb Noson's words in *Likkutei Halakhos*: "In these times, which are called 'heels of the Moshiach,' it is extremely important to wear the Tefillin of Rabbenu Tam, as all the true *tzaddikim* of our day have urged . . . Their holiness is elicited from the *mochin* (consciousness) of the great *tzaddikim*. Thus, we may receive strength from them to overcome the Evil Inclination that attacks us with even greater intensity in these final hours of our exile."

(*Likkutei Halakhos, Hilchos Tefillin* 5:29)

\*

An interesting historical note is found in the late Rabbi Yechezkel ("Chazkel") Brod's autobiography "*Chassidic Light in the Soviet Darkness*" (HaChai: Brooklyn), p. 142, where he tells how as a *yeshivah bachur*, he asked the Rebbe RASHAB of Lubavitch for permission to put on the Tefillin of Rabbenu Tam in keeping with the wish of his father, Rabbi Chaim Binyamin Brod, who was a Breslover Chassid. (At that time, Lubavitcher Chasidim did not begin to put on Rabbenu Tam's Tefillin until they reached age twenty.) The RASHAB assented, commenting that in this way Reb Yechezkel would fulfill two *mitzvos*: that of donning Rabbenu Tam's Tefillin and that of *kibud av*.

\*

The Rebbe also urged his Chassidim to buy the finest Tefillin, written by a truly pious scribe. (*Chayei Moharan* 511)

\*

Reb Gedaliah Kenig's customs regarding Tefillin include: they should be written in *ksav* ARI (as should *Sifrei Torah* and *Mezuzos*); and the *chasimos u-setumos* (closed and open passages) should reflect the *shittah* of the RaMBaM, not the TaZ, etc. (Most Ukrainian and Russian Chassidim follow the *shittah* of the RaMBaM, while most Galitzianer and Hungarian Chassidim follow that of the TaZ. Sefardim also follow the *shittah* of the RaMBaM.)

(The details of *ksav* ARI are presented in *Even ha-Shoham* I, *Hil. Tefillin* 36, citing *Sha'ar ha-Kavannos*, *Sha'ar Ma'amarei* RaSHBY, and *Pri Eitz Chaim*. As for the issue of *chasimos u-setumos*, see *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim* 32:36; *Shulchan Arukh ha-Rav*, ad loc. 32:50-53; *Mishneh Torah, Hil. Tefillin* 2:2; *ibid. Hil. Sefer Torah* 8:1-2. The *shittos* of the RaMBaM and the Rosh disqualify one another; therefore, the TaZ attempts to reconcile them. However, the Baal ha-Tanya questions if the *shittah* of the TaZ would be valid according to either Rishon, even *bi-di'eved*; see *Shulchan Arukh ha-Rav*, op cit. 32:52, end.)

\*

Reb Gedaliah preferred that the *sofer* not use the new "*peh*." He felt that the words of the *Mishnah Berurah* on this *'inyan* are commonly misunderstood (see diagram in appendix.)

(See *Mishnah Berurah, Orach Chaim* 36: *Mishnas Sofrim*, "*tzuras peh kifufah*." This only suggests that the new *peh* be used if the *sofer* has difficulty writing the traditional *peh*, in which the white space inside the letter looks like a *beis*.)

\*

Rabbi Noson Sternhartz, son of Reb Avraham, owned *parshiyos* that had been written by his paternal grandfather, Rabbi Naftoli Hertz Sternhartz, also known as "Reb Hertz Sofer" or "Reb Hertzkeh Sofer." These *parshiyos* were much sought after and were prized by all who possessed them. Rabbi Nachman Burshteyn (who was also a *sofer* during his younger years) saw them, and recalled that the *pehs* were written very precisely, with the shape of the letter *beis* inside sharply delineated.

(Heard from Rabbi Nachman Burshteyn)

\*

Rabbi Aharon Berlin examined the Rabbenu Tam's Tefillin of Rabbi Moshe Groman, a well-known Breslover of the previous generation. Reb Hertzkeh Sofer had written his *parshiyos*. Rabbi Berlin attested that aside from their beauty, there was nothing unusual about Reb Hertzkeh's *parshiyos*. The *chasimos u-setumos* followed the *shittah* of the Rambam, not the TAZ, as was common in that region; and the *ksav* was *ksav ARI*.

\*

Rabbi Aharon Berlin said that he never heard any special Breslover *mesorah* concerning Tefillin, *parshiyos*, or other '*inyanei safrus*.

\*

However, Rabbi Meir Kipnis heard that in Breslover communities in the Ukraine, there was an '*inyan* that the *chasimos u-setumos* follow the view of the RAMBAM, not that of the TAZ.

\*

Reb Gedaliah very much wanted the *sofer* to write the four letters of the *Shem Havayah* according to the instructions of the ARI *zal*.

(Rabbi Chaim Vital, *Sha'ar Ma'amarei RaSHBY, Vayikra*, 35a, citing *Zohar* III, 11b; Rabbi Noson Spira, *Matz"as Shemurim, Hil. Tefillin, Seder Kesivas Shem HaVaYaH*. This '*inyan* is also discussed at length in Rabbi Yitzchak Benzikri's *Kedushas Yitzchok*.)

\*

A craftsman who made Tefillin *batim* once complained to Reb Gedaliah that certain customers demanded that the edges of the *batim* be perfectly sharp. Reb Gedaliah exclaimed, "Do they think that their *batim* are supposed to be as sharp as horns? If so, there is no end to the matter. One who is obsessed with perfection will always be unhappy, and he will make everyone else unhappy, too. However, the Torah says of the *mitzvos* '*chai bahem*' – we are supposed to rejoice in the *mitzvos*, especially the *mitzvah* of Tefillin!"

(Cf. *Likkutei Moharan* II, 44, concerning excessive stringencies)

\*

The *kesher shel rosh* should be a double-*dalet*, which was the prevailing custom in the Ukraine. That is, the knot should look like a square, or a *mem setuma* with no space in the middle. Reb Gedaliah stated: "If Reb Avraham [Sternhartz] wore this *kesher*, we may assume that Reb Noson wore it, too."

(The *kesher* of the *tefilah shel rosh* represents the *ohr makif* in relation to the lower aspect of *Malkhus*, which is bound up with the *tefilah shel yad*. Concerning the kabbalistic meaning of the *mem setuma*, see *Zohar, Acharei*, p. 66, with *Mikdash Melekh*; also Rabbi Moshe Cordovero's commentary *Ohr Yakar*, ad loc., *siman* 12, *krakh* 13, p. 49; *Pardes Rimonim, Sha'ar ha-Osi'os, Sha'ar* 27, sec. 16. Rabbi Immanuel Chai Ricci, *Mishnas Chassidim, Tikkun Tefillin* 14:3, states that this *kesher* should be made "in the form of a double-*dalet*, which is a *mem setuma*." Additionally, Rabbi Noson Spira, *Matz"as Shemurim, Hil. Tefillin, Ta'am Sheini shel Tefilah de-Rosh*, s.v. *matzasi kasuv me-ha-chakham Lunzano...* attests that the disciples of the ARI *zal* wore such a *kesher*. He also cites *Zohar, Pinchas*, 251a, which explicitly states that the *kesher* should be a double-*dalet*. However, the *mechaber* rules in *Shulchan Arukh, Orach Chaim* 32:52, that the *kesher* of the *tefilah shel rosh* should be a single *dalet*. This is the prevailing view in both Lithuanian and Sefardic communities today. It is also the *minhag* of Chabad.)

\*

Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Bender also wore the *tefillah shel rosh* with a *mem setuma*.  
(Heard from Rabbi Avraham Moshe Wasilski)

\*

Rabbi Yosef Zvi Wasilski, founder of the Breslover *kehillah* in Williamsburg, wore the *mem setuma*. However, he originally did so because this is the *minhag ha-GRA*, which was his family's custom.

(Heard from Rabbi Avraham Moshe Wasilski)

\*

Rabbi Dovid Shapiro heard from Reb Gedaliah that there are two ways of making the “*mem*,” and only one is correct. It may be recognized from the reverse side (where the *retzu’a* appears as two more or less parallel lines). He also said that this *mem* was the Rebbe's *minhag*, as well as the *minhag* of all Breslover Chassidim who came to Eretz Yisrael from Russia, until a certain Chassid in Yerushalayim convinced them to change their custom.

(The method of tying this *keshet* is presented in *Ta’amei ha-Minhagim, Kuntres Tziyurim le-Limud*, p. 614. Rav Tiah Weil, son of the *Korban Nesanel*, states in his *Teshuvos* that the *mem setuma* was the only *minhag* Ashkenaz until “*chodoshim me-korov bo’u*,” and started making a single *dalet*. He adds that the *keshet* of the *mem setuma* was the *minhag* of both his father and his *rebbe*, Rav Yonasan Eibschutz.)

\*

The *keshet shel yad* should be made according to *minhag Sefard*, so that one winds the strap away from oneself. (This seems to be a universal Chassidic custom, with the exception of the Gerrer Chassidim, who wind the strap toward themselves, according to *minhag Ashkenaz*.)

\*

Reb Ephraim b’Reb Naftoli discusses the widespread custom of reciting “*Le-shem yichud...*” prior to reciting the *berakhah* over the Tefillin. He also mentions the additional *nusach* that some recite at the end of this text: “*Hareini mani’ach ha-tefilah shel yad kedei le-havei kol ha-AKUM tachas yad Shekhinah Tata’ah...*”

(See *Likkutei Even*, p. 49. Variants of this *nusach* are found in *Zohar Chadash*, 18c; *Siddur ARI-Chemdas Yisrael*; *Sefer Matzas Shemurim*; and various old Chassidic *siddurim*, such as *Siddur Tefillas Yesharah-Berditchev*. The Tzanzer Rov recited it, as did the Minchas Elazar; see *Darkei Chaim ve-Shalom* 46 and *Divrei Torah* II, 6. It is also mentioned by Rabbi Shalom of Kaidinov, *Mishmeres Shalom* 6:3)

\*

Both Reb Avraham and Reb Gedaliah put on the *tefilah shel yad* while sitting, following the view of the *Zohar* and *Ari zal*. This is Reb Elazar’s custom, as well.

(See *Zohar* III, 120b; *Sha'ar ha-Kavannos, Drushei ha-Tefillin, Drush* 5; *ibid. Drushei Krias Shema'*, *Drush* 6; *Pri Eitz Chaim, Sha'ar ha-Tefillin*, chap. 10, beginning. Most Sefardim today follow this custom. However, for Ashkenazim, it is the subject of much debate; see RaMA on *Shulchan Arukh, Orach Chaim* 25:11 with commentaries. *Darkei Chaim ve-Shalom* 58 states that the Minchas Elazar put on the *tefilah shel yad* while sitting. In his *Os Chaim* 25:15 and *hashmatos*, he mentions that in *chutz la'aretz*, he did so *be-tzinah*, but in Eretz Yisrael, where most people do likewise, he did so openly.)

\*

Concerning putting on the *tefilah shel yad* while sitting, Reb Gedaliah once told Reb Elazar, when the latter was still a *bochur* in his late teens, "First study the deeper meaning of this custom. Once you have understood it, then you may practice it." (Since he permitted others to do so without this precondition, it would seem that this instruction was meant only for Reb Elazar.)

\*

One should cover the *tefilah shel yad* with one's *talis* while reciting the blessing.  
(*Sha'ar ha-Kavannos, Drushei ha-Tefillin, Drush* 5)

\*

Reb Avraham Sternhartz recited separate *berakhos* on the *tefilah shel yad* and the *tefilah shel rosh*. After saying the second *berakhah* and adjusting the *tefilah shel rosh*, Reb Gedaliah recited "*Borukh shem kevod...*" Reb Elazar presumes that this was Reb Avraham's *minhag*, as well. (This is the subject of debate among the early authorities. Rav Hai Gaon, RIF, RaSHI, RaMBaM, and RaSHBaH advocate making one *berakhah*; while Rabbenu Tam, SeMaG, the Rosh, and the Tur advocate making two *berakhos*. Common Ashkenazic practice is to recite two *berakhos*, according to the ruling of RaMA, *Orach Chaim* 25:5. This position is also supported by *Zohar Chadash, Tikkunim*, 119b; *Midrash Tanchuma, Bo; Tosefos, Menachos* 36a, in the name of Rabbenu Tam and Shemusha Raba. This was also the *minhag* of the Baal Shem Tov according to *Shulchan ha-Tahor* [Komarno], *Tefillin* 25:4; *ibid. Ze'er Zahav* 3; likewise, Rabbi Pinchos of Koretz, as stated in *Imrei Pinchos* [Bnei Brak 2003] vol. I, *Sha'ar Seder ha-*

*Yom 33*. However, according to Beis Rizhin, this was one of the few *minhagim* of the Baal Shem Tov that the Maggid of Mezeritch did not keep. The *Beis Yosef*, ad loc., rules that one should say only one *berakhah* unless one makes an interruption between donning the *tefilah shel yad* and *tefilah shel rosh*. This is the common Sefardic practice, which is supported by the view of the ARI *zal*; see Rabbi Chaim Vital, *Sha'ar ha-Kavannos, Drushei Tefillas ha-Shachar, Drush 3*, beginning. The ARI *zal* also explains the *sod* of the Ashkenazic *minhag*. *Shnei Luchos ha-Bris, Chullin*, s.v. “*U-miyad*,” similarly advocates making only one *berakhah*. Most Chassidim recite two *berakhos*; however, like the Maggid of Mezeritch, some recite only one, e.g. the communities of Chabad, Boyan, etc.)

\*

Reb Avraham Sternhartz did not make three windings above the elbow to form a *shin*. Rather, the first winding below the *tefillah shel yad* should be below the elbow. In total there should be six full windings and two half windings, one before and one after the six. A *shin* is formed on the hand. Reb Elazar Kenig added that given Reb Avraham's family *mesorahs* and his fidelity to them, it would seem that this was Reb Noson's *minhag*, too.

(This is consistent with *Sha'arei Teshuvah* on *Shulchan Arukh, Orach Chaim 27:8, hagahah 15*, and *Sha'ar ha-Kavannos, Drushei ha-Tefillin, Drush 5, 10b*. By contrast, *Pri Eitz Chaim, Sha'ar ha-Tefillin 10:14*, states in the name of “*chaveirim*,” i.e., students of the ARI other than Rav Chaim Vital, that one should make a *shin* on the upper arm above the elbow. However, the author of *Sha'arei Teshuvah* points out that this does not have the authority of Rav Chaim Vital's *mesorah*. *Shulchan ha-Tahor [Komarno] 27:2* opines that the *minhag* of making a *shin* on the upper arm only applies to one who wraps the Tefillin of Rashi and Rabbenu Tam at the same time. However, other Chassidim have different traditions concerning this. For example, according to the Trisker Maggid, the Baal Shem Tov made a *shin* on the upper arm; see *Sefer Baal Shem Tov, Va-eschanan 84*. This custom is also mentioned by the Baal Shem Tov's disciple, Rabbi Moshe of Dalina, *Seraf Pri Eitz Chaim, Sha'ar ha-Tefillin*, chap. 5 [73b]; other Chassidic sources for making a *shin* on the *kibores* include *Imrei Pinchos [Bnei Brak 2003] vol. I, Sha'ar Seder ha-Yom 32* (although Rabbi Pinchos of Koretz made the *shin* with only two windings); *Siddur ha-Rav Baal ha-Tanya; Minhagei Karlin-Stolin; Mishmeres Shalom [Kaidinov] 4:4; Darkei Chaim ve-Shalom [Munkatch], 48*, et al.)

\*

EDITOR: While working on these *minhagim*, I asked my teacher, Reb Elazar Kenig: “For decades I have been winding the *retzu’ah* so that I make a *shin* on the *kibores*. Should I change my *minhag*?” He replied without hesitation, “Why?” – meaning that this was not in the category of those few *minhagim* that a Breslover Chassid should observe without fail. This is an example of Reb Elazar’s words quoted above, “The main thing is *yiras Shomayim*.”

\*

When Reb Gedaliah would wrap the *retzu’a* around his forearm, beginning with first winding, he would mentally count them with the seven Hebrew words of the verse: "*Ve-atem ha-deveykim ba-Shem Elokeikhem, cha'im kulkhem ha-yom . . .* And you who cleave to HaShem, your G-d, you are all alive today" (*Devarim* 4:4). Reb Gedaliah also said that one should turn over his arm and mentally count seven windings. He received this custom from Reb Avraham Sternhartz.

(Heard from Rabbi Chaim Man. Reb Elazar mentioned that counting the windings with these words reflects Reb Noson's remarks in *Likkutei Halakhos, Tefillin* 5:25.)

\*

Reb Elazar gazes at both *shins* on the *tefillah shel rosh* before putting it on.

(This is a *minhag* of the *Zohar (R’aya Mehemna)*, *Ekev*, 274a; also cf. *Darkei Chaim ve-Shalom* 54; *Os Chaim* 25:14; *Sefer Minhagim Chabad*, et al.)

\*

Reb Gedaliah did not use a mirror to position the *tefillah shel rosh*, considering this to be an excessive stringency. Rather, he did so by hand, aligning the lower corners of the *bayis* with his eyes. Reb Elazar does not use a mirror, either.

(Rabbi Chaim of Tzanz, *Divrei Chaim, Chelek II, Orach Chaim*, no. 6, states that there is no reason to use a mirror, because the head can accommodate two pairs of Tefillin. Although this is usually understood as vertically, he seems to understand it as horizontally, as well. I am grateful to Rabbi Dovid Shapiro for this *makor*.)

\*

The Rebbe *darshans* on *the posuk* commonly recited when winding the *retzu'a* three times around the ring-finger: “*Ve-eirastikh li le-'olam... be-tzedek u-ve-mishpat u-ve-chesed u-ve-rachamim... ve-yada'at es Hashem.*”

(See *Sichos ha-Ran* 217)

\*

Reb Levi Yitzchok Bender stated that in Uman, the Breslover Chassidim were particular not to remove the Tefillin of Rashi until after reciting '*Aleinu*, in keeping with the view of the *ARI zal.*

(*Si'ach Sarfei Kodesh* IV, 194; cf. Rabbi Chaim Vital, *Sha'ar ha-Kavannos*, *Inyan Tefillas Shacharis* (end) [Ashlag ed. p. 333b])

\*

Reb Gedaliah related that Reb Avraham Sternhartz and Reb Avraham ben Nachman once discussed the issue of wearing two pairs of Tefillin. They agreed that ideally one should have completed *Shacharis* wearing the Tefillin of Rashi and also have donned the Tefillin of Rabbenu Tam before the *z'man kriyas shema'*. (Editor: It seems that this is related to the kabbalistic practice of wearing both pairs of Tefillin at the same time. Nevertheless, it is permissible to put on Rabbenu Tam Tefillin at any time prior to sundown, or for those who are so accustomed, before donning *Shemusha Raba* Tefillin before Minchah.)

(Cf. *Imrei Pinchos* [Bnei Brak 2003] vol. II, *Sha'ar ha-Sippurim* 177, that this was also the *minhag* of Rabbi Pinchos of Koretz.)

\*

During his later years, Reb Noson would eat a piece of cake and drink something before donning the Tefillin of Rabbenu Tam.

(*Si'ach Sarfei Kodesh* II, 566)

\*

While wearing the Tefillin of Rabbenu Tam, Reb Gedaliah would recite the four *parshiyos* contained in the Tefillin in the following order: “*Kadesh li kol bechor*”; “*Vi-hoya ki yeviyacha*”; “*Shema’ / Ve-ahavta*”; “*Vi-hoya im shamo’a*.” He would also recite the *parshas ha-tzitzis*, since it is part of *kriyas Shema’*.

(Heard from Rabbi Elazar Kenig)

\*

When Reb Elazar puts away the Tefillin, he places the *kesher* of the *tefilah shel rosh* against the cover of the *bayis*, not underneath, due to the holiness of the *kesher*.

(Heard from Rabbi Dovid Zeitlin)

### **Tefillah be-Kavanah**

Reb Elazar has often spoken about the importance of *davenning be-kavannah*. At the most basic level, this means binding one's thought to the words one speaks. The Rebbe addresses this subject in *Likkutei Moharan* I, 80 ("*HaShem 'Oz*") and *Sichos ha-Ran* 75.

(See also *Likkutei Halakhos, Minchah* 7:57)

\*

Reb Elazar also said: "A person discovers who he really is while *davenning*. As the GRA states, '*Davenning* is like a mirror.' If one's faith is strong and one's heart is attached to HaShem, one will pray with true fervor and devotion; if not, one will know what one needs to work on. Prayer is the arena in which all of one's Torah learning and other efforts in '*avodas HaShem* are put to the proof."

\*

The Rebbe said that even one who knows how to *daven* with the kabbalistic *kavannos* should not do so -- unless for him this is like contemplating the simple meaning of the words. Prayer is *deveykus* to HaShem, and one must therefore pray with total simplicity. However, the Rebbe permitted us to study the kabbalistic *kavannos*.

(*Likkutei Moharan* II, 120)

\*

Reb Luzer has discouraged his *talmidim* from looking into *seforim* while reciting their prayers. "If you try to learn while *davenning*," he once commented, "your learning won't be learning, and your *davenning* won't be *davenning*."

\*

Reb "Motteh" Frank and another grandson of Rabbi Shmuel Shapiro once spent Shabbos in Meron with family members. After Ma'ariv, they left Reb Shmuel still *davenning* near the *kever* of Reb Shimon and went to make Kiddush and share the *se'udah* together. Two hours later when the meal was over, they returned to Reb Shimon's *kever*, where they found Reb

Shmuel still repeating the words from “*ahavas ‘olam*” at the beginning of Ma’ariv to the familiar Breslover *niggun*: “*ve-ahavaskha al tasir memenu le-‘olamim...*”

(Heard from Rabbi Mordechai Frank)

\*

Reb Gedaliah often used to daven in the Yeshivah Beis E-L, where the *minyán daven*s with the *kavannos* of the RASHASH. Following the Rebbe’s viewpoint, Reb Gedaliah did not *daven* with the kabbalistic *kavannos*. However, he spent as much time praying the *Shemoneh Esreh* as those who used the *kavannos*. Sometimes, he took even longer – in which case the Rosh Yeshivah, Rabbi Mordechai Sharabi, would wait until he had finished.

(Heard from Rabbi Elazar Kenig)

\*

Someone asked the Rebbe a question about the statement in *Shulchan Arukh (Orach Chaim 5:1)*: “When a person mentions God’s Name in his prayers, he should bear in mind the meaning of the Name [A-D-N-Y: Hashem is the Ruler over all, this being the way the Name is pronounced; and Y-H-V-H: ‘He was, is, and will be eternally,’ this being the way the Name is written].” The Rebbe replied, “Isn’t the literal meaning enough for you: A-D-N-Y – God?” When you concentrate on the simple meaning alone, your hands and legs and all 248 limbs and 365 tendons are bound to tremble!”

(*Chayei Moharan* 414)

### **Coming to Shul**

Even in his old age, Reb Avraham used to carry a large *talis beitel* containing his *talis*, Tefillin, and several *seforim* to *shul* in the morning.

(Heard from Rabbi Elazar Kenig)

\*

Someone once asked him, “Why do you trouble yourself to carry such a heavy burden when you could leave it in *shul*?” Reb Avraham replied, “Because the Rebbe said that the first thing a Jew carries should be his *talis* and Tefillin!”

(Heard from Rabbi Avraham Shimon Burshteyn, in the name of Rabbi Moshe Burshteyn)

\*

Breslover Chassidim were particular to carry their *talis* and Tefillin to *shul* every morning, and did leave them there overnight.

(Heard from Rabbi Shmuel Breines)

### **Hakhanos le-Tefillah / Spiritual Preparation Before Davenning**

The Rebbe states that before *davenning*, one should bind his spirit to the Creator. As a result of this *deveykus*, the words will flow from his lips as if of their own accord.

(*Sefer ha-Middos I, "Tefillah,"* 76)

\*

He also states: "If one exerts himself greatly in his preparations for prayer, even if afterward he doesn't *daven* so well, nevertheless, as a result of his preparations, his sufferings will be taken away from him.

(*Sefer ha-Middos I, "Hamtakas Din,"* 38)

### **Tefillah be-Tzibbur**

The Rebbe states that when one *davens be-tzibbur*, it is as if he brought a pure Minchah offering to the Beis ha-Mikdash.

(*Sefer ha-Middos* I, "Tefillah," 2, citing Talmud Yerushalmi *Berakhos* 5:11)

\*

Reb Noson expounds upon *tefillah be-tzibbur* in *Likkutei Halakhos*, and in addition extols the benefits of praying in a synagogue associated with Rebbe ("*nikra al shemo*"). On one occasion, the Rebbe commented that the prayers of a *minyán* of his followers could "split the heavens." (On the *mitzvah* of *tefillah be-tzibbur* in general, see *Shulchan Arukh, Orach Chaim* 90:9. Reb Noson's discussion appears in *Likkutei Halakhos, Tefillin* 2:10; *ibid. Kriyas Shema'* 2; *ibid. Tefillah* 4:12; *ibid. Beis ha-Knesses* 5:5. The Rebbe's remarks appear in *Chayei Moharan* 331.)

\*

Reb Elazar encourages his *talmidim* to always come to *shul* at least a few minutes before each prayer service in order to begin on time, with *yishuv ha-da'as*.

### **Nusach ha-Tefillah**

The ARI *zal* stated that there are twelve *nus'chos ha-tefillah* corresponding to the Twelve Tribes and the twelve heavenly gates through which the prayers of Israel ascend. He also taught that one who does not know his tribe should *daven* according to his *nusach*, which represents the thirteenth gate. The Maggid of Mezeritch deemed the *nusach* ARI to be the “*sha'ar ha-kollel*,” the all-encompassing gate through which all prayers may ascend. Thus, all of his *talmidim*, who disseminated the teachings of the Chassidic movement far and wide, used one version or another of *nusach* ARI. The reason for the diversity of these *nus'chos* is that the ARI modified the *nusach* of a certain *siddur* that was common in the Sefardic community of his day. However, as Ashkenazim, the Chassidim and other Eastern European kabbalists wished to adapt the ARI's modifications to *nusach* Ashkenaz. Since the Chassidic masters had different *shittos* about how to do so, and were working with texts that were sometimes inconsistent, a plethora of *nusach* ARI and *nusach* Sefard *siddurim* soon came into existence. The details of the *nus'chos* adopted by Breslover Chassidim (as well as the reluctance of many Breslovers to identify any one special *nusach* as that of the community as a whole) must be understood in this historical context. It is noteworthy that the Rebbe, Reb Nachman, deems the *tzaddik* to embody the “*sha'ar ha-kollel*” – not a particular *nusach ha-tefillah*. This is a subject that still needs clarification.

(See Rabbi Daniel Rimmer, *Tefillas Chaim*, Vol. I, which analyzes the history of *nusach* ARI and attempts to resolve all questions surrounding the *nusach* that the ARI actually *davenned*. His premise is that the “*sha'ar ha-kollel*” denotes this *nusach* exclusively. However, others contend that since the Maggid and his *talmidim* disagreed with this, the idea of a parallel *sha'ar ha-kollel* for Ashkenazim cannot be so easily dismissed. Rabbi Nachman's remarks about the *sha'ar ha-kollel* are found in *Likkutei Moharan* I, 9:2.)

\*

Rabbi Noson Tzvi Kenig of Bnei Brak compiled a "Breslover Siddur" that includes numerous Breslov teachings on various parts of the prayer service, published as *Siddur Sha'arei Ratzon*. However, the *nusach* is the standard Chassidic *Nusach Sefard*, and does not reflect any special Breslover *nusach ha-tefillah*.

\*

According to oral tradition, the Rebbe once remarked, "If I had been born into a family that *davenned* according to *Nusach Ashkenaz*, I would *daven* according to *Nusach Ashkenaz*." Reb Dovid Zeitlin, who grew up in the Oberlander community that follows *Nusach Ashkenaz*, once asked Reb Gedaliah about this *sichah*. He answered, "We need to know what the Rebbe meant by this: to whom he said it, and under what circumstances."  
(Cf. *Si'ach Sarfei Kodesh* I, 90)

\*

EDITOR: It is noteworthy that in *Chayei Moharan* ("Ma'alas Toraso u-Sefarav") 366, the Rebbe relates his teachings to the order of the daily prayers. He states, "We are still standing before 'Barukh she-amar,'" but after 'Hodu.' " Aside from the mystical meaning of this remark, it also happens to reflect *nusach Sefard* / *nusach ARI*.

\*

Reb Zalman Naftalis heard from Rav Moshe Bick and his son, Rav Avraham Bick, direct descendants of the *rabbanim* of Medzhibuzh, that although the Baal Shem Tov *davenned* from the *Siddur ARI*, his *shul* followed *nusach Ashkenaz*. This was the *nusach* of the *shul* before the Baal Shem Tov came to Medzhibuzh. Historically, only *yechidim davenned* from the *Siddur ARI* during this period. The sectarian emphasis on Chassidim *davenning* according to *nusach ARI*, special clothing for men and women, *takanos*, etc., came from the school of the Maggid, and especially from the Rebbe Reb Melekh and his *talmidim*.

\*

Breslover Chassidim traditionally *daven* according to the version of *Nusach Sefard* -- i.e., the Chassidic rite, which is rooted in *Nusach Ashkenaz* -- that was popular in the Ukraine, with a few minor variations noted below.

\*

The Siddur most commonly used by Ukrainian Chassidim was Rabbi Moshe of Slavita's *Siddur 'Avodah U-Moreh Derekh*. It is likely that the Breslover Chassidim in Uman and environs also used this Siddur.

(Heard from Rabbi Mordekhai Twersky, Hornestiepler Rebbe of Flatbush)

\*

Other popular *nusach Sefard* Siddurim available in the Ukraine were *Ohr la-Yesharim*, printed in Zhitomir, and *Tefillah Yesharah*, AKA the "*Berditchever Siddur*." Both contain the commentary *Keser Nehorah* by Rabbi Aharon of Zhelikhov (author of *Keser Shem Tov*, the first anthology of teachings from the Baal Shem Tov).

\*

When asked which printed Siddur the Breslover Chassidim used in the Ukraine, Rabbi Michel Dorfman replied with *temimus u-peshitus*, "The *Chassidisheh* Siddur, not the *Misnagdisheh* Siddur (i.e. *Nusach Ashkenaz*)!" From this, it would seem that all Chassidim in the region followed the same basic *nusach*, more or less.

\*

Reb Gedaliah's *nusach* is presented below, where indicated. The *nusach* that Reb Gedaliah received from Reb Avraham was Reb Noson's *nusach*. However, he did not receive everything. Therefore, he told his *talmidim* that in place of what he was not *mekabel*, they should follow what Rav Chaim Vital writes in *Sha'ar ha-Kavannos* (primarily in the section '*Inyan Tefillas Shacharis*, pp. 50-51) in the name of the ARI *zal*, since this is the most reliable source.

(Details of Reb Gedaliah's *nusach* were heard from Rabbi Elazar Kenig, Rabbi Noach Cheifetz, Rabbi Yisrael Davis, Rabbi Dovid Shapiro, and Rabbi Chaim Man. The *nusach* of *Sha'ar ha-Kavannos* is presented with annotations in the recent collection of *minhagei ARI zal*, *Even ha-Shoham*, Vol. I, *Hilchos Berakhos Nusach ha-Tefillah*, pp. 106-115; also cf. *ibid.* 119-125, *Seder ha-Shemoneh Esreh* according to *Pri Eitz Chaim*, pp. 165-174. Rabbi David Kafsian argues that the *derekh* of Breslov is deeply connected to that of the ARI *zal*, and whenever it is

possible to fulfill the words of the ARI *zal*, one should do so; see *Sefer Heikhal Ariel* [2002], beginning.)

\*

Reb Gedaliah did not teach his family members his personal *nusach ha-tefillah*, and only gave it over to a few *talmidim* who urged him to do so. (This is true of most of his other *minhagim*, as well.) Thus, Reb Gedaliah's *nusach* was not stressed when the Tzefas community was established, and the *nusach* of the community does not always correspond to what is written here. Reb Gedaliah considered the generic *nusach Sefard* to be basically *nusach ARI*. Most members of the Tzefas *kehillah* use the *Tefillas Kol Peh Nusach Sefard Siddur* published by Eshkol.

(Heard from Rabbi Elazar Kenig and Rabbi Chaim Man)

\*

Rabbi Nachman Burshteyn also said that for many decades, Breslover Chassidim in Yerushalayim used the *Tefillas Kol Peh Nusach Sefard Siddur*.

\*

Reb Elazar has told Sefardic members of his *kehillah* not to change their *nusach ha-tefillah*. However, if at some point they wish to change to the *nusach* of the community, which is basically the Chassidic *Nusach Sefard*, they are permitted to do so. This seems to be the common approach to this issue elsewhere, as well.

### **Hispa'alus / Enthusiasm**

Breslover Chassidim clap their hands occasionally during prayer. This reflects the Rebbe's teaching that one who prays with such fervor that he spontaneously claps his hands is given the words of prayer *min ha-Shomayim*. He also states that clapping the hands during prayer mitigates harsh judgments, saves one from spiritual forgetfulness, and puts all strife and conflict to rest.

(See *Likkutei Moharan* I, 45, 46, 212)

\*

The Rebbe charged his Chassidim to *daven* loudly and enthusiastically, "like the Chassidim of old."

(*Chayei Moharan* 78; also cf. *Tovos Zikhronos*, 5. A few other Chassidic groups also *daven* in this manner today, including Karlin-Stolin, Toldos Aharon, Toldos Avraham Yitzchok, Emunas Yisrael, Stetchin, etc.)

\*

Reb Avraham used to utter a *kvitch* – a high-pitched, suppressed cry -- every so often while *davenning*, even during *Shemoneh Esreh*.

(Heard from Rabbi Nachman Burshteyn. This may be related to the "silent scream" which the Rebbe mentions in *Sichos ha-Ran*, sec. 16.)

\*

He used to clap with his hands facing each other, so that the fingers of the right hand struck the matching fingers of the left hand. Sometimes his fingers were spread apart, while at other times they were closed.

(Heard from Rabbi Nachman Burshteyn)

\*

Rabbi Elazar Kenig, Rabbi Shmuel Moshe Kramer, and other contemporary Breslover teachers also clap this way during *davenning*.

\*

Nevertheless, Reb Gedaliah said in the name of Reb Avraham that one should not do so in a place where it is not customary to clap or raise one's voice in *davenning*, because "people will think you are either a *tzaddik* or a *meshuganer!*"

\*

The Rebbe also stated that when one *davens* in a *minyán* where *resha'im* are present, sometimes this may cause one to fall spiritually. A protection against this is to raise one's hands above during *davenning*.

(*Sefer ha-Middos* I, "*Nefilah*" 12; cf. *Tehillim* 28:2: "Hear the voice of my supplications when I cry out to You, when I lift up my hands...")

\*

The Rebbe states: "There is a *nachash* that produces a melancholy spirit, corresponding to the 39 Forbidden Labors. This is the 'corruption of the *nachash*.' Through sadness, the vital pulse becomes irregular. As a result, one's limbs become heavy . . . and one's hands become heavy, as it is written, 'And Moshe's hands were heavy.' " However, the Rebbe continues, when one raises one's hands toward heaven in *tefillah*, they become conduits for *ruach ha-kodesh*, *simchah*, and new life.

(See *Likkutei Moharan* I, 56, esp. sec. 9)

\*

The Tcheriner Rov once said, "When I see Reb Pinchos Yehoshua [a *talmid* of Reb Noson who lived in Tcherin] *davenning* with his hands raised, *es khappt mir a pachad* . . . it makes me tremble with awe!"

(Oral tradition heard from Rabbi Nachman Burshteyn in the name of Reb Levi Yitzchak Bender)

\*

Reb Yitzchak Breiter, leader of the Breslover Chassidim in Poland before the Holocaust, also *davenned* with his hands raised.

\*

Reb Levi Yitzchok Bender raised his hands only to the level of his head, not higher.

\*

Despite his instructions to his *talmidim* (mentioned above), the Rebbe *davenned* in stillness, without external signs of *hispa'alus*.

(Oral tradition)

\*

The young Breslover Chassidim from Poland who started coming to Uman in the 1920s brought with them a more extreme outward *hispa'alus* that was not favorably received by the Breslovers in Uman and the Ukraine. Many of the latter were also fervent *'ovdim*, particularly the *zekenim*; however, they felt that one's devotions should be of a private nature, and outer displays of emotion should be more contained. The "Poilishers," on the other hand, regarded their Russian counterparts as too "sleepy" and reserved, not appreciating the virtues of *hatzne'a lekhes* and "*shemen be-chashai*."

(Heard from Rabbi Nachman Burshteyn)

\*

Reb Levi Yitzchok Bender was also a Polish Breslover *bochur* who traveled to Uman. However, in his mature years when he was a central figure in the Yerushalayimer Breslov community, he expressed his disapproval of extreme displays of *hispa'alus* and conspicuous *'avodahs*. He had absorbed this from the *zekenim* in Uman whom he had known during his youth, as well as from his father-in-law, Reb Aharon Kiblitche. The latter was a great *'oved*, yet one never saw anything from him except *simchah* and *temimus* and *pashtus*.

(Heard from Rabbi Moshe Bienenstock)

\*

Reb Elazar Kenig has often described the *mesikus* of the *derekh ha-'avodah* of Reb Avraham Sternhartz and other *ziknei ana"sh*, who strove to *daven* and perform their devotions with intensity, but without fanfare. Reb Avraham's model was a balance of fiery *'avodah* with *darkhei no'am* and *pnimiyus* and *pashtus*.

### **Posture During Davenning**

The Rebbe states that it is beneficial to raise one's head during prayer.

(*Sefer ha-Middos* II, "Tefillah," 2; cf. *Midrash Rabbah, Noach* 33:3, which states that Rabbi Tanchuma used to raise his face toward heaven when praying on behalf of the Jewish people; also *ibid. Behar* 34:14. Rabbi Rachamim Nisim Yitzchak Palaggi, son of Rabbi Chaim Palaggi, in *Yafeh le-Lev, Orach Chaim* 95:4, actually quotes this entry from *Sefer ha-Middos* and after a somewhat involved analysis concludes that in a time of distress, national or personal, it is proper to gaze upward in *tefillah*; see *Rosh Hashanah* 29a, in the *Mishnah*. However, when reciting the prayers redacted by the *Anshei Knesses ha-Gedolah*, one should not do so. We are grateful to Rabbi Nachman Yosef Vitriol for the latter source reference.)

\*

Reb Gedaliah used to *daven* with his face raised slightly upward, even when his eyes were closed. He also did so during *Shemoneh Esreh*.

(Heard from Rabbi Dovid Zeitlin)

\*

He also used to fold his hand one over the other or keep them in his *gartel* during *Shemoneh Esreh*, and during Ma'ariv.

(Heard from Rabbi Chaim Man)

\*

Reb Levi Yitzchok Bender used to raise his head during *Shemoneh Esreh*.

(Heard from Rabbi Moshe Reiss)

\*

However, he did not do so constantly. Rather, he raised his head occasionally while *davenning*.

(Heard from Rabbi Motte Frank)

\*

Reb Shmuel Shapiro used to *daven* with his face inclined downward. However, this was during his later years, when he was no longer in good health. Therefore it is uncertain if he did so for halakhic or other considerations.

\*

Reb Shmuel Horowitz raised his head in *davenning be-derekh klal*, and also lifted his hands. However, it is unclear if he did so *Shemoneh Esreh*.  
(Heard from Rabbi Dovid Carlebach)

\*

Reb Elchonon Spektor raised his head even during *Shemoneh Esreh*.  
(Heard from Rabbi Aharon Lebel)

\*

Reb Avraham raised his face and hands, but it is unclear if he did so during *Shemoneh Esreh*.  
(Heard from Rabbi Nachman Burshteyn)

## **Zmanim**

Rabbi Levi Yitzchok Bender stated that there was “only one *zman kriyas Shema*’ ” followed by Breslover Chassidim in the Ukraine: that of the *Magen Avraham*.

(Heard from Rabbi Meir Wasilski and Rabbi Avraham Moshe Wasilski)

\*

When Rabbi Moshe Yaakov Rosen discussed with Reb Levi Yitzchok which *zmanim* should be followed by the then newly-formed Breslov *shul* in Monsey, NY, the latter said emphatically, “We only follow the *shittah* of the *Magen Avraham*.” When questioned further, he added, “The GRA’s *zman* never reached us in the Ukraine.”

(Heard from Rabbi Avraham Moshe Wasilski, who also participated in this conversation)

\*

Rabbi Avraham Shimon Burshteyn also heard this many times from Reb Levi Yitzchok, and added that this is the prevailing *shittah* in Eretz Yisrael today.

\*

Historically, most inhabitants of Yerushalayim followed the *shittah* of the *Magen Avraham*, and Rav Yechiel Michel Tukatzinsky’s *lu’ach* (and subsequently his son Rav Nisan Tukatzinsky’s *lu’ach*) was arranged accordingly.

(Heard from Rabbi Chaim Kramer)

\*

Rav Tukatzinsky’s *lu’ach* determined many *hanhagos* for Yerushalayim’s Breslover community. For example, concerning when to say or omit “*Av ha-Rachamim*” on Shabbos, etc., most people followed the *lu’ach*.

(Heard from Rabbi Avraham Shimon Burshteyn)

\*

Rav Tukatzinsky's *lu'ach* still hangs on the wall of the Breslover Shul in Me'ah She'arim, and is consulted for virtually all *zmanim* and other *hanhagos* of the *kehillah*.

(Heard from Rabbi Mordechai Frank)

\*

Rabbi Nochum Yitzchak Frank introduced the exactitude concerning *zmanim* to the Yerushalayimer Breslov *kehillah*. His family descended from the *talmidei ha-GRA*, who placed great emphasis on such precision. However, this attitude was not shared by Reb Levi Yitzchak Bender, or Breslover Chassidim from the Ukraine.

(Heard from Rabbi Avraham Moshe Wasilski and Rabbi Mordechai Frank)

\*

Rabbi Shmuel Breines once asked Rabbi Elyah Chaim Rosen of the Breslov Yeshivah in Yerushalayim about which *zman kriyas Shema'* we should follow – if we follow the *Magen Avraham*. He answered: “The Baal ha-Tanya wasn't a *posek*? The Vilna Gaon wasn't a *posek*? One could follow them also. The only *chumros* we have in Breslov are concerning *loshon hora'* and *shemiras ha-bris*. The main things are *Torah, tefillah, hisbodedus*, etc.”

(Heard from Rabbi Shmuel Breines)

\*

Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Bender stated that Breslover Chassidim followed Rabbenu Tam's *zman* for *tzes ha-kokhavim*, and that in the Ukraine at some times of the year this was as long as 90 minutes after *sh'kiah*.

(Heard from Rabbi Meir Wasilski. Rabbi Yitzchak Tchenagel of Tzefas also heard from Reb Levi Yitzchak that they followed Rabbenu Tam's *zman*. Rabbi Shlomo Meyer of Lakewood, NJ, heard this, too.)

\*

Rabbi Avraham Moshe Wasilski pointed out that Rabbenu Tam's *zman* was calculated according to the *ofek* (i.e. latitude, as determined by the horizon); therefore it could vary seasonally from a little more than 50 minutes to well over 90 minutes. This is borne out by

the Lodz *lu'ach* published before World War II. Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Bender attested to this, as well. Thus, *shittas* Rabbenu Tam cannot be simply defined as 72 minutes without qualification.

\*

Rabbi Aharon Mordechai Nochum Pinter heard from Gedolei Breslov that the concept of *sh'kiah* for Minchah was virtually not mentioned in the Ukraine – even concerning *she'eilos nashim*. Rabbi Zalman Naftalis heard the same, and added that this was because the *bein ha-shemashos* period was quite long. Therefore, the precise time of *sh'kiah* was not readily apparent. Reb Zalman felt that the contemporary Breslover *zehirus* about *davening* Minchah before the *sh'kiah* originated in Yerushalayim in more recent times.

\*

Rabbi Avraham Moshe Wasilski disagreed with those who say that *sh'kiah* was not mentioned in the Ukraine. Breslover Chassidim were careful to *daven* Minchah before the *sh'kiah*. However, they were less precise about defining the minute of *sh'kiah*, and in general the approach to *zmanim* was looser than in Yerushalayim.

## Kaddish

Rabbi Levi Yitzchok Bender remembered that in Uman, it was customary to begin Kaddish with the words “*Yisgadeil ve-yiskadeish . . .*” with a *tzeyre* under the *dalet*. (Presumably they also said “*Yisboreikh*” after “*Yehei Sh'mei rabboh...*” with a *tzeyre* under the *reish*.) This seems to have been a regional *minhag*, which Reb Levi Yitzchok personally followed.

(*Si'ach Sarfei Kodesh* VI, 504. Similarly, *Siddur ARI Rav Asher* and *Siddur Tefillah Yesharah-Berditchev* punctuate these words with a *tzeyre*.)

\*

The Breslover *zekenim* who followed this *shittah* did not place the *dagesh* on the last syllable (“*yis-ga-DEYL . . . yis-boh-REIKH*”), in keeping with the laws of *dikduk*, but on the second syllable (“*yia-GA-deyl . . . yis-BOH-reikh*”), as is common among Chassidim.

\*

Reb Moshe Burshteyn and his family say “*Yisgadeil*.” However, the more common *minhag* in Breslover communities today is to say “*Yisgadal ve-yiskadash...*” with a *patach* under the *dalet*, and “*Yisborakh*” with a *patach* under the *reish*.

\*

Reb Gedaliah said “*Yisgadal*” etc. with a *patach*.

(Heard from Rabbi Ephraim Kenig)

\*

In the Tzefas community, they are not particular about this one way or the other.

(Heard from Rabbi Ephraim Kenig)

\*

Reb Levi Yitzchak stated that in Uman, when the person reciting Kaddish came to the words “*shemei de-kudasha b'rikh hu...*” the *mispallelim* responded “*b'rikh hu*.”

(*Si'ach Sarfei Kodesh* IV, 148; *ibid.* VI, 505. This follows the *shittah* of the RAMA, *Orach Chaim* 56:2; however the *Mechaber* rules that one should say “*amen.*” The latter is the Sefardic *minhag*, which is also observed in some Chassidic communities.)

\*

Reb Levi Yitzchak tried to reintroduce this to the Yerushalayim Breslov community, but he did not succeed in doing so.

(Heard from Rabbi Chaim Cohen, in the name of Rabbi Nachman Rosenfeld, son of Rabbi Yeshuah Ber Rubenstein)

\*

Rabbi Nachman Burshteyn believed that the *minhag* of answering “*b'rikh hu*” came from the Polish Breslovers. Despite Reb Levi Yitzchak’s recollection, Reb Nachman said that the old Russian-Ukrainian Chassidim used to answer “*amen.*”

\*

The Yerushalayimer *minhag* is to respond “*amen*” at this point, not “*b'rikh hu.*” This is the *minhag* in the Tzefas community today.

(Heard from Rabbi Ephraim Kenig)

\*

Nevertheless, Rabbi Eliezer Berland of Mosdos Shuvu Banim follows Reb Levi Yitzchak’s *minhag* and says “*b'rikh hu.*”

(Heard from Rabbi Chaim Cohen, in the name of Rabbi Nachman Rosenfeld, son of Rabbi Yeshuah Ber Rubenstein)

## Shacharis

Reb Ephraim ben Naftali, a close follower of Reb Noson, mentions the *nusach* "la'asok be-divrei Torah" for the first of the three *birkhos ha-Torah*, rather than "al divrei Torah." It seems likely that this was the *nusach* followed by Reb Noson's *talmidim*.

(See *Likkutei Even*, p. 78. This is described in *Shulchan Arukh, Orach Chaim* 47:5-6. Although the *mechaber* redacts "al divrei Torah," *Be'er ha-Golah* cites the Rosh and Tur as mentioning that "some say 'la'asok be-divrei Torah,'" and also that this is the *nusach* of Ashkenazic and Polish communities. This *nusach* appears in *Siddur ARI Kol Yaakov, Siddur ARI Rav Asher, and Siddur ARI Rav Shabsai*; also *Siddur Heichal ha-Berakha* [Komarno], which points out that this *nusach* contains thirteen words, corresponding to the "*Yud-Gimel Middos she-ha-Torah Nidreshes Bahem*;" also see *Mishmeres Shalom* [Kaidinov], 8:2; *Darkei Chaim ve-Shalom* [Munkatch] 9, 10; et al.)

\*

Reb Noson mentions the common custom that immediately upon entering the synagogue, one recites the verse, "*Mah tovu ohalekha, Yaakov*. . . How goodly are your tents, O Jacob..." (Numbers 24:5). The Tcheriner Rav *darshans* on the accompanying verses "*Va'ani be-rov chasdekha avo veisekha*... As for me, through Your abundant kindness, I will enter Your house..." etc. (Psalms 5:8, 26:8, 95:6, 69:14), as found in most *siddurim*.

(*Likkutei Halakhos, Beis ha-Knesses* 5:5; *Zimras ha-Aretz* 54, 67. The custom of reciting "*Mah tovu*" and accompanying verses appears in *Siddur Rav 'Amram Gaon*. However, some *nuschos* begin with "*Va'ani be-rov chasdekha*," to avoid beginning with a verse from Bilaam; see *Levush* citing RaSHaL; *Abudarham*; *Siddur Heichal ha-Berakha* [Komarno], et al. Rabbi Moshe Cordovero expounds upon the meaning of reciting "*Va'ani be-rov chasdekha*" when entering the synagogue in *Tomer Devorah*, chap. 10.)

\*

Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Bender states that in Uman, *Shacharis* would begin with "*Adon 'Olam*," omitting "*Yigdal*." This is the custom in both the Tzefas and Jerusalem Breslov communities today, as well.

(*Si'ach Sarfei Kodesh* IV, 147; also cf. *Siddur Tefillah Yesharah–Berditchev*, in the name of the ARI *zal*; *Siddur Baal ha-Tanya*; similarly *Darkhei Chaim vi-Shalom* [Munkatch], *Seder vi-Nusach ha-Tefillah* 103. However, some Chassidim do recite “*Yigdal*,” based on the custom of the *SHeLaH Ha-kadosh*; also see *Mishmeres Shalom* [Kaidinov] 8:6.)

\*

Reb Gedaliah told his *talmidim* to omit both “*Yigdal*” and *Shalosh Esreh 'Ikkarim*. He said, “We have six hundred and thirteen ‘*ikkarim*.’ ”  
(Heard from Rabbi Dovid Shapiro)

\*

Reb Noson mentions the custom of reciting the *parshas ha-'akeidah* at the beginning of *Shacharis*. Some omit this on days when there is no *Tachanun*.  
(See *Likkutei Halakhos, Tefillas 'Arvis* 4:16; *ibid. Matanah* 5:58)

\*

Prior to *Korbonos*, some begin: “*Le-'olam yehei adam yirei Shomayim be-seiser u-va-golu'i...*” as stated in most *Nusach Sefard siddurim*, while others say “*be-seiser ki-va-golu'i*,” according to the view of the ARI *zal*. It is not known which *musach* Reb Gedaliah followed.  
(The first *musach* is that of the *Siddur RaMaK*. The second is found in both *Pri Eitz Chaim* and *Sha'ar ha-Kavannos*, as well as in most versions of the *Siddur ARI*.)

\*

Reb Noson *darshans* on both orders of *Birkhos ha-Shachar*, Ashkenazic and Sefardic. However, the *seder ha-berakhos* traditionally said in the Breslov community was the Ashkenazic (which places the *berakhos* “*shelo 'asani goy... 'oved... ishah*” toward the beginning).  
(See *Likkutei Halakhos, Hashkamas ha-Boker* 1:11, et passim. Rabbi Chaim Vital states that he did not receive any instruction about the *seder ha-berakhos* from the ARI *zal*. Therefore, Ashkenazim and Sefardim generally follow their separate *minhagim* on this; exceptions to this rule include Chabad Chassidim, who follow the Sefardic order.)

\*

Reb Noson mentions the *nusach* of the *berakhah* “*Ha-nosein la-sekhvi vinah le-havchin...*” in the present tense, not “*asher nasan la-sekhvi...*” in the past tense.

(See *Likkutei Halakhos, Birkhas ha-Shachar* 1, 3:1, et passim. This is the *nusach* of the RaMBaM, *Siddur Rav ‘Amram Gaon, Abudarham, Siddur RaMaK*, and ARI *zal*, as cited in *Pri Eitz Chaim, Sha’ar ha-Berakhos*, 4; among the Chassidim, cf. *Siddur ha-Rav Baal ha-Tanya, Siddur Heikhal ha-Berakhah-Komarno*, et al. However, “*asher nasan*” is the *nusach* of the *Gemara, Tosefos, RIF, Machzor Vitry*, and *Kol Bo*. It also is redacted in the *Siddur Tefillah Yesharah-Berditchev*. For further discussion, see *Likkutei Maharich*, vol. I, p. 66.)

\*

Reb Gedaliah would recite *Korbonos* for Shacharis while standing, and *Korbonos* for Minchah while sitting.

(Heard from Rabbi Dovid Shapiro)

\*

Reb Dovid Shapiro asked Reb Gedaliah if one who comes late to *shul* should skip parts of the service in order to *daven* with the *tzibbur*, or if he should continue *ke-seder*, like some Chassidim. He said, “There is a *Shulchan Aruch...* However, if you skip things, be sure not to omit the *kriyas shema’* before *Korbonos*.”

(See *Shulchan Arukh, Orach Chaim* 52; however, *Be’er Heitiv*, ad loc., mentions that many *anshei ma’aseh* do not try to keep up with the *minyan*, but *daven ke-seder* at their own pace, in keeping with the view of the ARI *zal*, and do not skip anything. *Sha’arei Teshuvah* similarly does not object to this; also cf. *Sefer ha-Minhagim Chabad, “Tefilah,”* p. 8. As for the importance of this *kriyas Shema’*, Reb Noson states that it expresses the faith in God's Oneness, which destroys *‘avodah zarah*, this being the main *tikkun* of the *Korbonos*; see *Likkutei Halakhos, Kriyas Shema’* 4:14 and *Tefillah* 4:18.)

\*

Before "*Hodu*," it is customary in the Tzefas Breslov *kehillah* to recite "*Yedid Nefesh*."

\*

Prior to "*Barukh she-amar*," Reb Elazar sometimes reads "*Lamenatze'ach bi-Neginos*" in the form of a Menorah. He uses a diagram that arranges the order of verses from right to left, following the *shittah* of the *talmidei ha-Baal Shem Tov*.

(This practice is discussed in a number of kabbalistic works, including the commentary of Rabbeinu Bachaye, *Vayechi*; *Sefer Yiras E-l* by the *Baal ha-Roke'ach*; *Sefer Kan Tzipor* on *Tehillim* by Rabbi Yitzchak Eizik of Stretin, et al.)

\*

Reb Gedaliah would be "*meshalshel*" the "Hallelukahs" in *Pesukei de-Zimra*. That is, he would connect the final "Hallelukah" of one psalm with the first "Hallelukah" of the next. This was the Breslover *minhag* in Uman.

(Heard from Rabbi Dovid Shapiro. See *Tur, Orach Chaim* 51, citing Rav 'Amram Gaon.)

\*

Rabbi Nachman Galant of Tzefas, a grandson of Rabbi Yochanan Berditchever, also heard that this was the Breslover *minhag* in the Ukraine.

(Heard from Rabbi Hillel Lubman)

\*

The Rebbe states that in "*Vayevarekh Dovid*," when one recites the phrase "*u-tzeva'ah ha-shomayim Lekha mishtachavim . . .*" The heavenly hosts prostrate themselves unto You" (Nechemiah 9:6), it is a favorable time for one to add a personal prayer. According to *Kitzur Likkutei Moharan* I, 231: "[At this moment] one may pray for everything, for then all the angels prostrate themselves and render homage to G-d, may He be blessed. Therefore, it is good to entreat that HaShem command them to transmit whatever one needs. For example, if one needs healing, one should meditate that HaShem command [the angels] to invest the spiritual powers of healing into one's bread and water, etc."

(Cf. *Likkutei Moharan* II, 1, re. the role of the angels in the transfer of *shefa*, etc.)

\*

Reb Gedaliah would do so verbally, asking Hashem to command his angels to bring about the healing of various individuals, whose names he mentioned.

(Heard from Rabbi Elazar Kenig and Rabbi Noach Cheifetz)

\*

In *Yishtabach*, the conclusion of the *berakhah* is "*Melekh Yachid Chei ha-'Olamim.*" This phraseology parallels that in the opening *berakhah* of *Pesukei de-Zimra*: "*Barukh she-amar . . . Yachid Chei ha-'Olamim, Melekh meshubach...*" Reb Avraham Sternhartz attested that this was the Rebbe's custom, which has been followed by Breslover Chassidim ever since.

(This corresponds to the *nusach* in the Chabad *Siddur*. Since this is an unusual *nusach*, for which we have not yet found an earlier source, it is possible that this was something that the Rebbe and Baal ha-Tanya once discussed and agreed upon; *ve-tzorekh iyyun*. The Manistricher Chassidim, whose Rebbe lived in Uman, also had this *nusach*. However, it seems that they inherited it from Chabad, as stated by Rabbi Avraham Yehoshua Rabinowitz, '*Ehrkei Yehoshua, Kuntres Perach Shoshanim* 17.)

\*

Rabbi Shmuel Shapiro and Rabbi Shmuel Chechik both concurred, "There is no special Breslover *nusach ha-tefillah* except to conclude '*Yishtabach*' with the words '*Melekh Yachid Chei ha-'Olamim.*' "

(Heard from Rabbi Symcha Bergman)

\*

In *Birkhas Krias Shema*, Reb Gedaliah would say "*koneihem*" instead of "*konam*," as mentioned by the *Be'er Heitiv* in the name of the ARI *zal*.

(*Be'er Heitiv, Orach Chaim* 59:1; similarly, see *Machzor Vitry, Abudarham, Pri Eitz Chaim, Siddur Rav Shabsai Sofer*)

\*

In the *kedushah de-meyushav*, Reb Gedaliah would say "*u-vi-ne'imah, kedushah...*" with a *shuruk* under the letter *dalet* (or a *vav* with a *melupum* after the *dalet*). One should also pause between "*u-vi-ne'imah*" and "*kedushah*."

(This reflects the view of Rashi on *Yeshaya* 6:3 and *Tosfos, Chagiga* 13b; Rabbi Chaim Vital, *Sha'ar ha-Kavannos, Inyan Nusach ha-Tefillah; Siddur ARI Rav Asher, Siddur Tefillah Yesharah–Berditchev; Siddur Heichal ha-Berakhah* [Komarno]; *Siddur Tefillas Yesharim–Ben Ish Chai; Darkei Chaim vi-Shalom* [Munkatch], *Nusach ha-Tefillah* 138. Alternately, some say "*kedoshah*," with a *cholam* under the *dalet*. This follows the view of *Abudarham*; Rabbi Yisrael Yaakov Algazi, *Shalmei Tzibbur, Nusachos be-Birkhas "Yotzer*," citing *Sefer ha-Kavannos be-ksav yad Rav Chaim Vital* (which contradicts the standard text); *Shiyarei Knesses ha-Gedolah; Sefer Hekhalos*; similarly, *Be'er Heitiv, Orach Chaim* 59, s.k. 3; *Eitz Yosef, Otzar ha-Tefillos*, et al. This is also the *nusach* of the *Siddur ha-Rav Baal ha-Tanya*.)

\*

In the paragraph that begins "*La-E-l barukh*," the word "*la-Melekh (E-l chai vi-kayam)*" should be pronounced with a *kametz* under the *lamed*, as stated by the *Be'er Heitiv* in the name of the *ARI zal*.

(*Be'er Heitiv, Orach Chaim* 59:1; cf. *Sha'ar ha-Kavannos, Yad Aharon*, et al.)

\*

Before reciting the *berakhah* "*Yotzer ha-Me'oros*," one says "*Ohr chadash 'al Tzion ta'ir ve-nizkeh kulanu bimeheirah le-oro*." Reb Noson explains that this is meant to awaken the soul's deepest desire for Hashem.

(See *Likkutei Halakhos, Birkhas ha-Shachar* 5:28. This *nusach* follows the view of the *Zohar, Pekudei; Abudarham*; Rabbi Chaim Vital, *Pri Eitz Chaim, Sha'ar Ahavah*, 5, et al. The *Minchas Elazar* redacts it in his *nusach*, as stated in *Darkei Chaim ve-Shalom* 140. However, some omit it, in keeping with the Sefardic custom; see *Tur, Orach Chaim* 59, citing Rashi, et al.)

\*

According to *Sha'ar ha-Kavannos*, one does not add the words “*ve-hiskin me-oros mesame'ach 'olamo asher bara.*”

\*

Reb Gedaliah would begin the paragraph before *Kri'as Shema'* with the words “*Ahavas 'Olam*” during the week, and “*Ahavah Rabbah*” on Shabbos, in keeping with the custom of the ARI *zal*. This reflects the tradition that the ARI *zal* prayed according to the Sefardic (i.e. *Eidot ha-Mizrach*) *nusach* during the week, and according to the Ashkenazic *nusach* on Shabbos and Yom Tov. Kabbalistically, *Ahavah Rabbah* corresponds to the World of *Atzilus* (Emanation) and *Ahavas 'Olam* corresponds to the World of *Beriah* (Creation). (Rabbi Chaim Vital, *Sha'ar ha-Kavannos*, *Drush Kavannos “Yotzer;” Ohr Tzaddikim*, 16:16; also see *Eishel Avraham*, *Orach Chaim* 60:1, who mentions this *nusach*. Rabbi Chaim Elazar Spira of Munkatch, *Darkhei Chaim vi-Shalom*, *Seder vi-Nusach ha-Tefillah* 141, cites it in the name of Rabbi Zvi Elimelekh of Dinov, *Bnei Yissaschar*, *Ma'amarei Shavuos*, *Ma'alas he-Chag* 7, *hagahah*. This also is said to have been the *minhag* of the Baal Shem Tov.)

\*

According to *Sha'ar ha-Kavannos*, upon saying “*maheir ve-havei 'aleinu...*” one allows the *talit* to fall from one's shoulders, and gathers the four *tzitzis* into one's left hand, and holds them near one's heart throughout the recitation of the three paragraphs of the “*Shema*’.”

\*

In “*Ahavas 'olam*,” Reb Gedaliah combined both *nus'chos*, Ashkenaz and Sefard, as follows: “*maheir vi-havei 'aleinu berakhah vi-shalom, vi-haviyeinu le-shalom meheirah me-arba' kanfos kol ha-arets...*” He instructed Rabbi Shmuel Tukatzinsky to do so, as well.

\*

Near the end of “*Ahavas 'Olam*,” Reb Gedaliah would say “*u-shevor 'ol golus ha-goyim me-'al tzavorenu...*”

(Heard from Rabbi Noach Cheifetz and Rabbi Dovid Shapiro. This seems to be a combination of two *mus'chos*: “*’ol ha-goyim*,” which is found in *Abudarham*, *Siddur RaMaK*, *Siddur ARI Rav Asher*, et al.; and “*’ol goluyos*” or “*’ol ha-golus*,” which is found in some *Nusach Sefard siddurim*, e.g. *Siddur Heikhal ha-Berakhah* [Komarno]; also see *Likkutei MaHaRiCH*, vol. I, p. 129. As a historical aside, at some point, due to fear of the Christian censors, certain texts of the Siddur were emended to state “*uleinu*”; while others subsequently combined the censored text with the original text; see Rabbi Yaakov Emden, *Lu’ach Eres* (Rabbi Dovid Yitzchaki, ed.), *hosafah*, p. 459, note 7; also see *Siddur ha-Meforash, hakdamah*. The Manistritcher Rebbe used to say “*u-shevor ’ol goliyos ha-goyim...*” at the end of *Birkhas ha-Mazon*, as stated in *Ehrkei Yehoshua, Kuntres Perach Shoshanim* 40; however, it does not state if this was also his *musach* in “*Ahavas ’Olam.*”)

\*

Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Bender remembered that in Uman the Breslover Chassidim said “*u-shevor ’ol ha-goyim me-’al tzavorenu...*”  
(*Si’ach Sarfei Kodesh* IV, 149)

\*

Reb Gedaliah said to close one’s eyes, using one’s right hand to close them tightly, during both verses: “*Shema*” and “*Boruch shem.*”  
(This is related to the Rebbe’s words in *Likkutei Moharan* I, 36:3. Rabbi Chaim Vital in *Sha’ar ha-Kavannos, Drushei Kriyas Shema’, Drush* 6, similarly states that one should cover his eyes for both verses. However, the *minhag* mentioned in *Shulchan Arukh, Orach Chaim* 61:5 is to cover one’s eyes one while reciting only the first verse. Reb Noson relates shutting one’s eyes during *Kriyas Shema’* to nullification in the *Ohr Ein Sof* in *Likkutei Halakhos, Milah* 5:11, based on the Rebbe’s words in *Likkutei Moharan* I, 65:3. That is, by gazing beyond the multiplicity of the finite world we ordinarily experience, we can perceive the Divine Oneness, which is all encompassing and infinite.)

\*

Immediately after *Kri'as Shema'*, Reb Gedaliah was particular to recite the words beginning "*Emes ve-yatziv*" until "*ve-yafeh*" in one breath.

(Cf. *Siddur Tefillas Yesharim–Ben Ish Chai*, ad loc., that one should not interrupt the recitation of these fifteen words. The fifteen repetitions of the connective letter *vav* have kabbalistic significance according to the *kavannos* of the *ARI zal.*)

\*

According to *Sha'ar ha-Kavannos*, in the paragraph after *Shema'*, when one's says "*u-devarav chaim ve-kayamim... la'ad...*" one kisses the *tzitzis*, passes them over one's eyes, and releases them.

\*

Reb Gedaliah said that after reciting *Kri'as Shema'*, one should keep all four *tzitzis* in front of oneself until after *Shemoneh Esreh*; however, one may tuck them into one's *gartel* in order not to hold them the entire time.

(Heard from Rabbi Dovid Shapiro)

\*

According to *Nusach Sefard*, the paragraph after the *Shema'* concludes: "*ve-ein lanu ode elokim zulasekha sela,*" while *Nusach Ashkenaz* concludes "*ve-ein lanu elokim zulasekha.*" Reb Gedaliah used to say that we add the word "*ode*" because if one were to expire from *kalos ha-nefesh* after the word "*Elokim*" according to *Nusach Ashkenaz*, he would have denied belief in Hashem, *chas ve-shalom*. However, if one were to stop after the word "*ode,*" he would have stated that we have no "other god." This *vort* is supported by the Gemara in *Nedarim* 10b, which states that we use the term "*korban la-Shem*" as opposed to "*la-Shem Korban,*" because if one were to pause after saying "*la-Shem,*" he would have taken Hashem's Name in vain.

(Heard from Reb Elazar Kenig)

*Shemoneh Esreh*: It is not clear if in the *berakhah* "*Magen Avraham,*" one should say "*konei ha-kol*" or "*vi-konei ha-kol.*" However, *Sha'ar ha-Kavannos* omits the *vav*.

(The standard *Nusach Sefard* includes the *vav*. However, all versions of the *Siddur ARI zal* omit it. So do several Chassidic *nus'chos*, e.g. *Imrei Pinchos* [Bnei Brak 2003] vol. I, *Sha'ar Seder ha-Yom* 86; *Siddur Baal ha-Tanya*; *Siddur Tefillah Yesharah-Berditchev* (in *hagahah*); *Darkei Chaim ve-Shalom* [Munkatch] 155; *Erkhei Yehoshua* [Manistritch], *Kuntres Perach Shoshanim* 18; *Siddur Tzelosa de-Shlomo* [Bobov]; et al. This omission is supported by *Siddur Rav 'Amram Gaon, Abudarham; Zohar, Pekudei*, p. 161; *Tikkunei Zohar, Tikkun* 70, et al.)

\*

Reb Levi Yitzchak Bender remembered that in Uman, in the *berakhah* “*Atah gibor*,” the Breslover Chassidim pronounced the word “*gashem*” with a *kametz* under the *gimel*, not “*geshem*” with a *segol*. Most Breslovers today also do so.

(*Si'ach Sarfei Kodesh* IV, 150. This may be a regional *minhag*, since the Skverer Chassidim follow it, as did the Manistritcher Chassidim of Uman. However, Rabbi Shimshon Barsky of Bnei Brak said that his father, Rabbi Noson Barsky, pronounced “*geshem*” with a *segol*. Since Reb Noson Barsky lived in Lublin, Poland, this may reflect the local custom in that region. The vowelization of this word is the subject of much halakhic debate.)

\*

During the summer, in the *berakhah* “*Atah gibor*,” Reb Gedaliah would say “*mashiv ha-ru'ach u-morid ha-tal*.” This is the custom of the Tzefas community.

(See *Be'er Heitiv, Orach Chaim* 114:3, and the *BaCH*, ad loc. This is the *nusach* of *Siddur ARI Kol Yaakov*. Among Chassidim, cf. Rabbi Tzvi Hirsh of Ziditchov, *Pri Kodesh Hilulim*, in the name of Rabbi Yisrael of Koznitz; *Shulchan ha-Tahor* [Komarno], 114, with *Zer Zahav; Darkhei Chaim vi-Shalom* [Munkatch], *Shemoneh Esreh* 157, in the name of Rabbi Zvi Elimelekh of Dinov; et al. It is also the *nusach ha-GRA*.)

\*

Once Reb Gedaliah was leading the *davenning* and said “*mashiv ha-ru'ach u-morid ha-tal*.” Apparently this raised some eyebrows. Reb Michel Dorfman, who was present at the time, later asked him about this. Reb Gedaliah replied, “When the Gabbai announces this [on the first day of Pesach], he calls out ‘*mashiv ha-ru'ach u-morid ha-tal*.’ “

(Heard from Rabbi Ephraim Kenig)

\*

Reb Avraham Sternhartz only said “*morid ha-tal.*”

(Heard from Rabbi Nachman Burshteyn)

\*

Reb Gedaliah said that Reb Avraham possessed a family *mesorah* that the Rebbe's *nusach* in the *berakhah* “*Atah chonen*” was “*de’ah, binah ve-haskil.*”

(Heard from Rabbi Elazar Kenig. Cf. *Siddur Rav 'Amram Gaon, Abudarham; Pri Eitz Chaim; Siddur RaMaK; Siddur ARI Rav Asher; Siddur Tefillah Yesharah – Berditchev*; etc. According to the annotated *Siddur ARI* published recently by Rabbi Daniel Rimmer, this was the *nusach* of the ARI *zal.*)

\*

Rabbi Nachman Burshteyn also remembered that Reb Avraham said “*de’ah, binah, ve-haskil.*” Reb Avraham also told him that this had been the *nusach* of the Breslover Chassidim in Tcherin.

\*

Rabbi Avraham Shimon Burshteyn heard that Reb Avraham followed this *nusach* because Reb Noson often repeats it in *Likkutei Halakhos*, and probably in his letters, as well.

\*

This *mesorah* conflicts with that of Reb Levi Yitzchak Bender, who stated that in Uman, the *nusach* of this *berakhah* was “*chokhmah, binah ve-da’as.*” However, it is possible that sometimes there were diverse customs among Breslover Chassidim in Uman.

(See *Si’ach Sarfei Kodesh* IV, 150)

\*

Rabbi Noson Barsky, son of Rabbi Shimshon Barsky of Uman, used to say “*chokhmah, binah ve-da’as.*”

(Heard Rabbi Shimshon Barsky of Bnei Brak)

\*

Rabbi Noach Cheifetz recalled that Reb Gedaliah once told him to combine both *nus’chos*: “*de’ah, binah ve-haskil, chokhmah, binah ve-da’as.*”

(Heard from Rabbi Noach Cheifetz)

\*

The custom of the Tzefas community is to say “*de’ah, binah ve-haskil,*” while in Yerushalayim, it seems that most Breslovers say “*chokhmah, binah ve-da’as.*”

\*

In “*Atah kadosh,*” most Breslovers add the words “*ki E-l Melekh gadol ve-kadosh Atah.*” This is part of the standard *Nusach Sefard*. It is also the custom of the Tzefas community.

(In support, see *Abudarham*, based on *Siddurei ha-Geonim*. However, *Sha’ar ha-Kavannos* omits this phrase, and it is not found in any versions of the *Siddur ARI* except that of Rabbi Asher of Brod, which brings it as an alternative *nusach*. Early Chassidic sources that omit it include *Imrei Pinchos* [Bnei Brak 2003] vol. I, *Sha’ar Seder ha-Yom* 87; *Siddur Baal ha-Tanya*; *Siddur Tefillah Yesharim-Berditchev*; *Siddur Heichal ha-Berakhah-Komarno*. The Manisritcher Chassidim in Uman also did not say it, as stated in *‘Erkhei Yehoshua, Kuntres Perach Shoshanim* 18; and it is omitted by the communities of Bobov, Munkatch, Spinka, Karlin-Stolin, and Slonim. However, most other Chassidim include it.)

\*

Reb Avraham’s *nusach* for the *berakhah* “*Re’eh na*” was: “*u-maher le-g’aleinu ge’ulah sheleimah meherah le-ma’an shemekho...*” This is the custom of the Tzefas community.

\*

Reb Gedaliah's *nusach* for the *berakhah* "Ri'fa'einu" was: "Rifa'einu HaShem ve-neirafei, hoshi'einu vi-nivashe'ah, ki sihilaseinu Atah, vi-ha'alei refuah sheleimah le-khol makhoveinu u-le-khol makoseinu, ki E-l Melekh Rofei Ne'eman vi-Rachaman Atah..." This is the custom of the Tzefas community.

(Heard from Rabbi Elazar Kenig, Rabbi Noach Cheifetz, and Rabbi Dovid Shapiro)

\*

Reb Elazar said that what he heard specifically in the name of Reb Avraham was the inclusion of the phrase "*le-khol makhoveinu u-le-khol makoseinu.*"

\*

During the summer, Reb Gedaliah would say "*Borkheinu,*" according to the Sefardic custom. This is mentioned in the writings of the ARI *zal*. However, the Tzefas community follows the more common Ashkenazic custom to say "*boreikh 'aleinu*" with "*ve-sein berakhah*" as the seasonal variation for the summer months.

(Cf. *Abudarham*; *Pri Eitz Chaim*, *Sha'ar ha-'Amidah*, 19; *Sha'ar ha-Kavannos*, etc. Several Chassidic *siddurim* also include "*borkheinu,*" e.g. *Siddur Tefilah Yesharah-Berditchev*, *Siddur Beis Aharon-Stolin*, *Siddur Magen Avraham-Slonim*, and others.)

\*

In "*Borekh 'Aleinu,*" Reb Gedaliah said "*ve-sab'enu me-tuvah,*" not "*me-tuvekha,*" even when traveling.

(Heard from Rabbi Dovid Shapiro. Similarly, *Siddur ARI Rav Asher*; *Imrei Pinchos* [Bnei Brak 2003] vol. I, *Sha'ar Seder ha-Yom* 89; *Siddur Tefilah Yesharah-Berditchev*; et al. This is *nusach Ashkenaz*; also see *Magen Avraham*, *Orach Chaim* 117:2, in the name of Maharshal and *Teshuvos ha-Rosh*. However, *Ohr Tzaddikim*, brings the *nusach* "*me-tuvekha,*" as does the *Siddur Baal ha-Tanya* and *Darkei Chaim ve-Shalom* [Munkatch], 163.)

\*

Reb Avraham's *nusach* for "*birkhas ha-minim*" included the phrase "*ve-khol oyvei 'amkha meherah yikaresu...*" Reb Elazar did not know if he then said "*ve-ha-zeidim,*" "*u-malkhus zaton,*" "*u-malkhus zeidim,*" or "*u-malchus ha-risha'h.*" However, the rest of the *berakhah* followed the standard *Nusach Sefard*: "*meheirah si'aker u-sishaber u-simager u-sikhalem vi-sashpilem vi-sakhni'em bi-meheira vi-yameinu...*"

(Cf. *Siddur ARI Rav Asher*, which is goes "*oyvei amkha,*" although there are difference elsewhere in the *berakhah*.)

\*

Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Bender remembered that in Uman, the *nusach* of *birkhas ha-minim* included the phrase "*ve-khol ha-risha'h ki-rega' toveid,*" not "*ve-khol ha-minim.*"

(*Si'ach Sarfei Kodesh* IV, 150)

\*

Reb Elazar mentioned that Rav Mordechai Sharabi, with whom both he and his father studied Kabbalah, once pointed out that the *roshei teivos* of the *chasimas ha-berakhah* "*shoveir oyvim u-machniya' zeidim*" has the same *gematria* as the Divine Name *SHaDaY*.

\*

Reb Gedaliah once explained that we say "*oyvei 'amkha,*" not "*oyvekha,*" because we cannot recognize the enemies of Hashem; however, the *siman* is if they are enemies of Klal Yisrael, as indicated by the *lashon* "*oyvei 'amkha.*"

(Heard from Rabbi Dovid Shapiro, who added that this seems to be based on Rashi, *Bamidbar* 10:35, s.v. "*misanekha,*" citing Midrash Tanchuma.)

\*

In "*Al ha-tzaddikim,*" Reb Avraham would say "*ve-'al chasdekha ha-gadol be-emes nish'anenu.*" This is the *nusach* of the Tzefas community.

(This is an old Sefardic *mesorah* that appears in various siddurim. According to *Tefillah le-Dovid*, this phrase alludes to the *Avos*: “*chasdekha*” corresponds to Avraham; “*ha-gadol*” corresponds to Yitzchak; and “*ve-emes*” corresponds to Ya’akov; see *Likkutei Maharich*, vol. I, p. 156.)

\*

Reb Levi Yitzchok Bender concurred that the *nusach* of this *berakha* includes the phrase *be-emes nish’anenu*,” not “*be-emes u-ve-samim nish’anenu*.”  
(*Si’ach Sarfei Kodesh* IV, 150)

\*

In “*Es tzemach Dovid*,” Reb Avraham Sternhartz would say “*u-metzapim tamid le-yeshu’ah*.” This is the *nusach* of the Tzefas community.  
(Heard from Rabbi Noach Cheifetz and Rabbi Dovid Shapiro)

\*

This conflicts with the *mesorah* of Reb Levi Yitzchok Bender, which is “*u-metzapim le-yeshu’ah*,” omitting the word “*tamid*.”  
(*Si’ach Sarfei Kodesh* IV, 150)

\*

Reb Avraham's *nusach* for “*Shema' koleinu*” was: “*Av ha-Rachaman, shema' koleinu, HaShem Elokeinu, chus vi-rachem 'aleinu, ve-kabel be-rachamim u-ve-ratzon es tefilaseinu, ki E-l shomei'a' tefillos ve-sachanunim Atah. U-milfanekha Malkeinu reikam al tishiveinu. Chonenu va-'anenu u-shema' tefilaseinu, ki Atah shomei'a' tefillas kol peh, 'amcha Yisrael be-rachamim...*” This is the *nusach* of the Tzefas community.

(*Pri Eitz Chaim, Sha'ar ha-'Amidah* 19. The phrase “*Av ha-Rachaman, shema' koleinu*” was also the *nusach* of the Baal Shem Tov; see *Ze'er Zahav* on *Shulchan ha-Tahor-Komarno*, 18:8; *Keser Nehorah* on *Siddur Tefillah Yesharah-Berditchev*, loc cit. It was also the *nusach* of Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz, *Imrei Pinchos* [Bnei Brak 2003] vol. I, *Sha'ar Seder ha-Yom* 93. Similarly, both

*Siddur ARI Kol Yaakov* and *Siddur ARI Rav Asher* begin the *berakhah* “*Av ha-Rachaman, shema' koleinu...*” *Siddur ARI Kol Yaakov* also includes the phrase “*chonenu va-'anenu u-shema' tefilaseinu...*” although it omits “*'amcha Yisrael be-rachamim,*” which is *nusach Ashkenaz*. The latter is an alternative *nusach* that some *siddurim* append to “*shomei'a tefillas kol peh.*”)

\*

This, too, is the *nusach* that Reb Levi Yitzchak Bender remembered from Uman.  
(*Si'ach Sarfei Kodesh* IV, 150)

\*

Reb Levi Yitzchok stated that in Uman, the *nusach* for *birkhas* “*Retzei*” was: “*u-sefilasam meheirah be-ahavah sekabel be-ratzon...*” including the word “*meheirah.*”  
(*Si'ach Sarfei Kodesh* IV, 150)

\*

In “*Sim shalom,*” Reb Gedaliah included the phrase “*be-rov 'oz ve-shalom,*” as in the standard *Nusach Sefard*. However, he did not say “*yachad,*” but only “*ki-echad be-ohr panekha...*”

\*

Reb Levi Yitzchok Bender also stated that this was the *nusach* in Uman.  
(*Si'ach Sarfei Kodesh* IV, 150)

*Kedushah*: Reb Elazar lifts up his feet slightly on his toes when he recites the declarations “*kadosh, kadosh, kadosh...*” “*baruch kevod HaShem...*” and “*yimlokh...*”  
(See *Tur, Orach Chaim* 125 for further discussion. *Sha'ar ha-Kavannos, Shnei Luchos ha-Bris, Minchas Aharon, Ben Ish Chai: Halakhos I, Terumah* 4, et al., state that one should raise one's feet at each declaration, while *Mishnas Chassidim* states that one should do so only while reciting “*kadosh...*”)

*Birkhas ha-Kohanim*: According to Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Bender, the *minhag* in Uman was that after each of the three sections of *Birkhas Kohanim* during *chazoras ha-shatz*, the *tzibbur* would answer "*kein yehi ratzon*," not "*amen*." This was the regional custom. However, when *Birkhas Kohanim* was actually performed by a Kohen, as in Eretz Yisrael, the *tzibbur* would answer "*amen*."

\*

According to some halakhic opinions, even in *chutz la'aretz*, where *Birkhas Kohanim* is not performed daily, if the *shaliach tzibur* is a Kohen, one should also answer "*amen*."

(See *Shulchan Arukh*, *Orach Chaim* 127:2; *Mishnah Berurah* 10-11, ad loc.; *Magen Avraham* in the name of the *BaCH*, ad loc.; *Mishmeres Shalom* [Kaidinov] 10:8; *Darkei Chaim ve-Shalom* [Munkatch]; *Sefer ha-Minhagim-Chabad*; *Likkutei MaHaRiCH*, Vol. I, p. 165.)

\*

The *minhag* Yerushalayim is to respond "*amen*," not "*kein yehi ratzon*." This became the *minhag* of the Breslev community in Eretz Yisrael long ago, and remains the *minhag* in both the Yerushalayim and Tzefat communities.

(Heard from Rabbi Yitzchak Kenig)

*Tachanun*: On *yahrtzeits* of *tzaddikim* and *Gedolei Torah*, Breslover Chassidim recite *Tachanun*. This is in contrast to certain other Chassidic groups that omit *Tachanun* at these times.

(The reason usually given for omitting *Tachanun* is because a *tzaddik* ascends to greater heights on his *yahrtzeit*, thus it is a day of joy in the supernal worlds for him and for all who share a spiritual bond with him. However, this custom is not found in the *Shulchan Arukh* or *Zohar*. Other Chassidic communities that recite *Tachanun* on *yahrtzeits* of *tzaddikim* include Chabad and Munkatch.)

\*

Reb Gedaliah was fastidious in saying *Tachanun* except on those days specified in *Shulchan Arukh* and *halakhah*.

(Heard from Rabbi Noach Cheifetz)

\*

He told his *talmidim* to say *Tachanun* even in a *shul* that omitted *Tachanun* on the *yahrtzeit* of a *tzaddik*.

(Heard from Rabbi Aharon Waxler and Rabbi Moshe Grinberger)

\*

When Reb Moshe Grinberger asked him if this might be a *zizul* to the *kavod* of the *tzaddik*, Reb Gedaliah replied, “Absolutely not.” Reb Moshe then asked, “Even the *yahrtzeit* of the Rebbe Reb Melekh on Khof-Alef Adar?” To this, Reb Gedaliah replied, “It is *b’khlal* not a *zilzul!*”

(Heard from Rabbi Moshe Grinberger)

\*

He also told his *talmidim* to say *Tachanun* in a *shul* where it is customary to omit *Tachanun* at Minchah, as long as it is before the *sh’kiah*. Reb Elazar explained that this applies when one is able to do so discreetly. However, one should not do so if people will notice and possibly look askance.

(Editors)

\*

The *neshamah* of Rav Sa'adia Gaon once appeared in a vision to the Rebbe and told him to perform *nefilas apayim* on his left arm, both during *Shacharis* and *Minchah*. Some Breslovers emulate this, while others do not. Still others take an in-between position, leaning on both arms during *Shacharis* to avoid separating from the *tzibbur*.

(See *Chayei Moharan* 448; cf. *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim* 131:1, as discussed in *Mishnah Berurah* s.k. 4-6, citing *ha-GRA*; similarly, *Chayei Adam* 32:33, who adds that if one wears Tefillin during *Minchah*, he should nevertheless lean on his left arm)

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Rabbi Eliyahu Chaim Rosen, for many years Rosh Yeshiva of the Breslov Yeshiva in Jerusalem, would practice *nefilas apayim* on both arms during *Shacharis*. However, Reb Avraham Sternhartz and Reb Gedaliah Kenig did not fall on the left arm at all during *Shacharis*, because the Rebbe did not communicate this custom to Reb Noson. (It is axiomatic in Reb Gedaliah's thought that whatever Rabbi Nachman told to Reb Noson was a *horo'ah* for Klal Yisrael. However, what he did not communicate to Reb Noson did not have this implication. Reb Gedaliah received this tradition from Reb Avraham Sternhartz.) (The *minhag* of falling on both arms is also mentioned by Rabbi Shalom of Kaidinov, *Mishmeres Shalom* 12:1, although this was not his personal practice.)

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In *nefilas apayim*, some Breslover Chassidim say "*Le-Dovid, Eilekha HaShem nafshi esa*" (*Tehillim* 25), according to the *nusach* of the ARI *zal*. However, most say "*HaShem al bi-apkha*" (*Tehillim* 6:2-11), according to *Nusach Ashkenaz*. The *kavanah* related to the former entails *mesirus nefesh*, therefore it is not appropriate for the average person. Reb Gedaliah told his *talmidim* not to say "*Le-Dovid, Eilekha...*" (See Rabbi Chaim Vital, *Sha'ar ha-Kavannos, Drushei Nefilas Apayim, Drush 2*, end; also see *Even ha-Shoham*, Vol. I, 131, in the commentary *Petuchei Chosam* re. the ramifications of this danger. A similar position is taken by the Minchas Elazar, *Darkei Chaim ve-Shalom* [Munkatch] 187; also *Minhagei Karlin-Stolin*, where the Rebbe follows the practice of the ARI *zal* and the Chassidim do not. This is the case in other communities, as well.)

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Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Bender recalled that in Uman on *Yom Sheini* and *Yom Chamishi*, Breslover Chassidim would recite the long *Tachanun* according to *Nusach Polin* (i.e. *Nusach Sefard*). This is the custom in virtually all Breslov communities today. (*Si'ach Sarfei Kodesh* IV, 151)

*Kriyas ha-Torah*: Reb Dovid Shapiro once asked Reb Gedaliah which *nusach* to say for "*E-l erekh apayim*" prior to removing the Sefer Torah from the Aron Kodesh, *Nusach Ashkenaz* or *Nusach Polin*. He told him to combine the *nus'chos*. (The formula Reb Dovid Shapiro came up

with is: “*E-l erekh apayim ve-rav chesed ve-emes u-malei rachamim, al be-apkha sokhichenu, ve-al tasteir panekha mimenu...*” and afterwards “*hoshi’enu ve-hatzilenu mi-kol ra’...*”) )

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However, he told Rabbi Noach Cheifetz simply to say both *nus’chos*.  
(Heard from Rabbi Noach Cheifetz. The Manistritcher Chassidim of Uman had the *minhag* of saying both versions; see ‘*Erkhei Yehoshua, Kuntres Perach Shoshanim* 24.)

\*

Rabbi Ephraim Kenig stated that in Tzefas, the *minhag* is to recite both *nus’chos*.

\*

Rabbi Moshe Burshteyn, founder of the Ohr Avraham *shul* in Yerushalayim, says both *nus’chos*. His grandson, Reb Avraham Shimon once wanted to combine them, but Reb Moshe said that he should not do so, but rather say one after the other.  
(Heard from Rabbi Avraham Shimon Burshteyn)

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Reb Avraham Shimon believed that the custom to say both *nus’chos* came from the Russian Chassidim.

\*

Rabbi Moshe Burshteyn is particular that the *bimah* in the Ohr Avraham *shul* should be positioned so that it directly faces the *Aron Kodesh*.  
(Heard from Rabbi Yehudah Bunker)

\*

Reb Moshe is also particular that both doors of the Aron Kodesh be opened for *hotza'ah ve-hachnossas Sefer Torah*, and that they remain open until the Chazan recites "*Gadlu la-Shem iti...*" In the Ohr Avraham *shul* there is a sign to this effect on the inside of the door of the Aron.

(Heard from Rabbi Avraham Shimon Burshteyn, in the name of Rabbi Moshe Burshteyn)

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Rabbi Avraham would not allow anyone, including children, to stand facing the *'oleh* during *kriyas ha-Torah*.

(Heard from Rabbi Moshe Burshteyn and Rabbi Nachman Burshteyn)

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Rabbi Avraham Shimon Burshteyn thought that this was probably due to a concern that the children should not distract or confuse the *'oleh* or *ba'al koreh*. This was his father Rabbi Nachman Burshteyn's assumption, as well. However, since Reb Nachman was a youth at the time, he never asked Reb Avraham for an explanation of this.

(Editor: Another reason may be due to the halakhic problem of standing with one's back to the Aron Kodesh. This requires further research.)

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Reb Noson Sternhartz, Reb Avraham's son, also did not allow the children to stand in front of the *'oleh*.

(Heard from Rabbi Yitzchak Kenig)

\*

Reb Avraham was particular that aside from the *'oleh* and the *ba'al koreh*, only two people should stand at the *bimah* during the Torah reading. Reb Avraham used to stand on one side, and Reb Shmuel Shapiro used to stand on the other side. Today this is the *minhag* in the Ohr Avraham *shul*.

(Heard from Rabbi Nachman Burshteyn; see *Mishnah Berurah, Orach Chaim* 141:4, citing *Sofrim* 14:14, that it would not be fitting that only one *chazan* should stand at the *bimah*; rather, one person should stand to his right and another to his left, corresponding to the *avos*.)

\*

Reb Levi Yitzchok Bender recalled that in Uman, it was customary to lift up the Sefer Torah after the conclusion of the *kriyah*.

(*Si'ach Sarfei Kodesh* IV, 190)

*U-va le-Tzion*: In the *kedushah de-sidra*, most Chassidim do not say “*Kadosh, Kadosh, Kadosh...*” and “*Borukh Shem...*” responsively out loud. However, in the Me’ah She’arim Breslov *kehillah* and in the Ohr Avraham *shul*, this is the *minhag*.

(Heard from Rabbi Avraham Shimon Burshteyn)

*Aleinu*: Reb Gedaliah was accustomed to cover his mouth with his hand and spit -- albeit only the smallest amount -- after reciting the words “*she-hem mishtakhavim le-hevel va-rik, u-mispallelim el eil lo yoshi’a’*” (*Yeshayah* 45:20). When asked as to the meaning of this *minhag*, Reb Gedaliah replied, “We should do anything possible to be *machniya’* the *Sitra Achara*.”

(Heard from Rabbi Dovid Shapiro. Similarly cf. *Sefer Minhagim-Chabad*, although a different reason is given, namely that one should not derive benefit from the saliva while uttering these words. Expectorating during *Aleinu* is a centuries-old custom that is still followed by the communities of Chernobyl, Skver, Spinka, Skulen, and a few residents of Me’ah She’arim, where Reb Gedaliah grew up. Although the *SHeLoH, Chavas Ya’ir*, and others reject this *minhag*, the *TaZ* on *Yoreh De’ah* 179:5, affirms it. The old Skulener Rebbe, Rabbi Eliezer Zusia Portugal, used to spit an almost imperceptible amount. By contrast, Lubavitcher Chassidim spit copiously.)

\*

Rabbi Ephraim Kenig remembered that when his father used to spit, he would turn his head slightly toward the back.

\*

Rabbi Michel Dorfman said that spitting during '*Aleinu*' was not the *minhag* of Breslover Chassidim in the Ukraine.

\*

Rabbi Aharon Berlin did not remember this as having been a *minhag* of the old Breslover Chassidim that he knew during his youth.

\*

Reb Avraham Shimon Burshteyn said that he rarely saw this *minhag* in the Breslover community of Me'ah She'arim. He did not recall Reb Levi Yitzchok having done so. His grandfather Rabbi Moshe Burshteyn also does not spit.

\*

However, Rabbi Nachman Burshteyn did remember Breslover Chassidim of the previous generation who used to spit during '*Aleinu*'.

\*

It was customary in Uman to recite "*Adon 'Olam*" and the *Shesh Zekhiros* (Six Remembrances) every day after *Shacharis*. Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Bender states that this was a regional *minhag* throughout the Ukraine.

(*Si'ach Sarfei Kodesh* IV, 197)

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The *Shesh Zekhiros* are also recited after *Shacharis* on Shabbos and Yom Tov.

(Heard from Rabbi Nachman Burshteyn)

\*

Reb Gedaliah said in the name of Reb Avraham that the custom of concluding the service with "*Adon 'Olam*" alludes to the concept of "making *echad* out of the entire prayer," discussed in *Likkutei Moharan* I, 65.

(The custom to say *Adon 'Olam* at the end of *davenning* is an old *minhag* brought in *Mateh Moshe*, sec. 216. It is also discussed in *Ta'amei ha-Minagim*, *'Inyanei Berakhos*, 29.)

### **Rikkud / Dance**

Breslover Chassidim dance in a circle after every prayer service, except on the first day of Rosh Hashanah until after Musaf, Yom Kippur, and during the Nine Days.

(Cf. *Si'ach Sarfei Kodesh* IV, 184, 191)

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Like most Chassidim, they dance in a counter-clockwise direction. This seems to be based on kabbalistic principles.

(Re. the direction of the *rikkud*, see e.g. *Sifrei ha-RaSHaSH, Kavannos Peratiyos*, p. 23; et al.)

\*

Reb Noson once told his *talmid*, Reb Moshe Breslover, "I will give you a way of *teshuvah*: dance every day!"

(Rabbi Shmuel Horowitz, *Avaneha Barzel*, 28, 29, p. 62)

\*

A man from a small hamlet once came to Reb Noson and told him his troubles. Reb Noson advised him to be *be-simchah*, and to dance every day. The man replied that in his village there was not another Jew to dance with. Reb Noson said, "After you use the *beis ha-kisei* and wash your hands and recite '*asher yotzar*' *be-simchah*, *khapp a rikkud mit di handtikh* -- dance with the towel!"

(Heard from Rabbi Nachman Ettinger, based on an existing cassette from Rabbi Hirsch Leib Lippel)

## **Leaving Shul**

Reb Elazar always kisses the *paroches* on the Aron Kodesh before leaving the synagogue. He also turns as he reaches the doorway and takes a step or two backward while exiting, as an expression of *kavod beis ha-knesses*.

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We have tried our best to make certain that what we have written is correct. However, this is still a work-in-progress. Therefore, we welcome any additions or corrections from our readers that are based upon reliable sources. If you have any constructive comments, please send us an email: [meoreiohr@aol.com](mailto:meoreiohr@aol.com)

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