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**The Concept of Fatherhood in
Traditional Jewish Sources and Its
Impact on Current Views of
Fatherhood**

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Abstract

This thesis proposes that Jewish children brought up in observant families have advantage over children who grow up in secular households. The thesis shows that it is not necessarily due to the religious scriptures, to which they are exposed, nor to the commandments, which the families adhere to; rather to the fact that observant men who follow the traditional way of life are more available to their children, and their presence and familial responsibilities bring about stability that helps the children to flourish.

The research is a cross section between ancient religious text and Modern Hebrew literature. Through the prism of the traditional Jewish perspective of fathering, it examines all depictions of fatherhood in the works of the prize-winning Israeli author, Haim Sabato. As a leading member of the observant Orthodox community and an accomplished contemporary writer, Sabato's works serve as a great testament of life within traditional communities.

The role of the father in society has changed dramatically in the last few decades. In many countries, the numbers of births per year have consistently dropped. The percentages of children being raised in fatherless homes has risen steadily. Statistics point to a myriad of challenges amongst the children in these families. Despite the trends in the broader society, the observant Jewish community has displayed a strong commitment to the institution of marriage, as set down in the tradition. Men marry at an earlier age and the number of children remains above the average. The incidence of divorce is lower, and child abandonment is rare.

The research provides an understanding of the Jewish way of life. The focus of the research centers on the behaviors of the father towards the son. Through close reading and analysis, this research shows the impact of the tradition on the Jewish male's attitude towards fathering, and highlights those aspects of the tradition that have helped maintain the availability of the "traditional" father and its impact on the stability of the home. The routine

and patterned lifestyle of the observant Jew provides many opportunities for healthy interaction between fathers and sons. The thesis shows that this sense of stability and availability is a vital factor in the son's development into a flourishing adult, who is a positive member of the community.

The language of the thesis is English with Hebrew quotes, from both ancient and contemporary sources.

Key Words:

Fatherhood, Jewish Religion, Haim Sabato, Talmud, Parenting, Hebrew Literature, Tradition, Customs, Continuity

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Table of Contents

Section 1: Introduction.....	6
Section 2: The Concept of Male and Female.....	12
Section 3: The Concept of Fatherhood.....	22
Section 4: Fatherhood Studies: Research to Date.....	28
Section 5: Jewish Family Life: Theory and Practice.....	36
Section 6: Paternal Responsibilities According to Jewish Law.....	49
Section 7: Rabbi Haim Sabato – His Life and Work.....	64
Section 8: Emet Me'Eretz Titzmach.....	74
Section 9:	
Depiction of Fatherhood in Novella 1: Galgal Chozer Ba'Olam.....	79
Section 10:	
Depiction of Fatherhood in Novella 2: Emet Me'Eretz Titzmach.....	107
Section 11:	
Depiction of Fatherhood in Novella 3: Shivrei Luchot.....	120
Section 12: Volume 2: Tium Kavannot.....	133
Section 13: Depiction of Fatherhood in Adjusting Sights.....	136
Section 14: Volume 3: K' Afapay Shachar.....	151
Section 15: Depiction of Fatherhood in K' Afapay Shachar.....	156
Section 16: Volume 4: Boi HaRuach.....	174
Section 17: Depiction of Fatherhood in Boi Haruach.....	178
Section 18: Conclusions.....	218
Bibliography.....	235

Section 1

Introduction

Fatherhood itself has become problematic in our culture. I first realized how bad things had become in the 1980's. I'd been giving a talk about family life to a group of Jews and Christians in the north of England, and afterwards a local vicar came up to me and told me how bad things were in his parish. I used to go around schools, he said, talking about God the Father, but I can't do it anymore because the children don't understand. And the word they don't understand isn't God; it's father.¹

1.1 Raison D'etre

As the father of seven children and an educator for the past thirty years, I have always been intrigued by the relationship and dynamics between fathers and their children. The care of young children has always been a natural endeavor for me. Although I grew up as the youngest of three siblings, I found many outlets to involve myself with children. Assisting families with young children and serving as counselor's aide in the local day camp in Chicago provided many hours of experience. As I grew older, I had two wishes: To marry young and to have many children.

Fortunately, both goals were achieved. I married Nurit in 1981, just prior to my twenty first birthday. Since the two of us shared a similar vision of raising a large family, the decision to have children as soon as possible was mutual. The first three children were born within a span of five years and much time and energy were invested in dealing with the day to day maintenance of a growing household. By our fourteenth anniversary we had our full complement of seven children. It was a busy time.

¹ Chief Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, "Maternal Identity," *Covenant and Conversation* (April 2009). http://www.ou.org/torah/article/maternal_identity#.UvtqrT8LIU.

In the early years of parenting, my role as father was not clearly defined. It could easily have been described as ongoing mother's aid and support. I observed closely every behavior my wife performed with the children, and in a short time I could do most of them with a reasonable level of proficiency. Instead of one mother, in regards to the feeding, grooming, and overall maintenance of the children, it appeared that our children had two.

I often asked myself these questions: What unique role am I supposed to play as father? Does this duty come with a set of expectations and responsibilities? Where can this knowledge be found?

1.2 The Religious Component

I was born and raised in an American Jewish home. Both of my parents came from non-observant Jewish families, yet they had a strong Jewish identity and many basic rituals were maintained in my home. As I grew older, I became more interested and involved in the Orthodox tradition. I chose to become a rabbi and teacher of religious studies. Although I was inclined to have children long before I adopted a religious lifestyle, I believe the spirit of the tradition held great influence on my attitudes towards family life.

In 1985, I assumed my first teaching position in an elementary school in Israel. As school rabbi, I supervised all religious instruction for grades 1-6. My duties included weekly visits to many of the local kindergartens in order to share an inspirational message. From the beginning of my career, I was in contact with hundreds of children and their parents.

Unlike many of my peers who sought positions in high schools and college level institutions, I chose to work with pre-school and elementary age children. My intuitive skills and understanding of the young mind provided me with an invaluable springboard for creating meaningful learning experiences for my students. My work was extremely rewarding, providing much insight into the nature of young children. In the same way that I

enjoyed parenthood, regardless of the amount of effort exerted, I always regarded my time with the children as a labor of love, and not as a burden.

As my career advanced, I gained classroom experience at all levels from elementary, middle school, high school and college. I had the unique privilege to teach students in college whom I taught many years prior in kindergarten. The experience and exposure to students spanning nearly three decades have provided the impetus for this research.

During my career, I have observed a shift in the way my students perceived family life in general, and the mission and the importance of fatherhood in particular. Family structures and routines were much more evident in the early years of my work. As time passed, more and more emphasis was placed on work, and parents spent less time with their children. Describing a typical week at home, the students often told me that they rarely sat together at a family meal. Even on weekends, the opportunity for significant family time was minimal. As a future goal, building a family for themselves did not rate highly on their spectrums. Acquiring a fine education and building a successful career often took precedence.

Despite this shift, I have noticed that the religious observant students had a more positive orientation to family life than their non-observant counterparts. Although both groups may be career oriented, the more traditional young adults held a clear vision of marrying and raising children. The less traditional students displayed a lack of enthusiasm towards marriage, and utter opposition when posed with the question of raising children.²

It is my belief that family education and fatherhood training is imperative for the future of society and the wellbeing of the children. The family unit, and in particular the role of the father, is under threat. For reasons like lack of commitment, the high expense of family life, and the probability of divorce,

² Based on conversations with Jewish high school students in Cape Town as part of Jewish life skills course, 2008-2010. Emphasis in this introduction is on personal experience and not statistical research.

entire sections of the population have chosen to remain single. The numbers of absentee fathers and single mothers have risen sharply, causing a significant change in the upbringing of the children. Despite these modern trends and attitudinal shifts, it appears that observant Jewish men and women have displayed a hearty resilience. It is still common for this group to marry at a younger age and raise many children in the spirit of Jewish law. I propose to study how the Jewish tradition promotes a positive attitude towards fatherhood, and how the observant lifestyle creates the framework for effective fathering.

In this research I aim to prove that the family values and practices of the tradition have been an essential factor in the stability and continuity of Jewish home life. My goal is to examine the traditional view of fatherhood in order to understand the impact of the tradition on current Jewish fathering behavior. Since the role of the father has shifted in society, I wish to examine how the tradition cultivates a positive outlook towards fatherhood in Jewish males.

This research will center on the father and son relationship. The Jewish traditional lifestyle provides ample opportunity for father and son interaction. This framework allows the son to frequently observe the father's behavior, enabling the son to identify with the father figure, a crucial step in the shift from boyhood to manhood. The following topics will be addressed in this research.

- The concept of "Fatherhood."
- The importance of the "Father Figure."
- What is a "present and available" father?
- What in the traditional way of life promotes a present and available father?
- Can this be gleaned from literature depicting the traditional way of life?

1.3 Methodology

Since my training is in the literary field, in examining and expounding on ancient Jewish text, this research is neither sociological, nor an empirical study, but rather a close study of literary text. This research will center on the intersection of the theoretical concept of fatherhood, as presented in Jewish religious text, and the expression of the desired fathering behavior as found in Jewish literary characters. For the literary component, it was important to select an author who has a deep understanding of the tradition, who could present the characters in an authentic fashion. I was also interested in a contemporary author who has proven literary competence amongst the literary society in Israel.

For the corpus of this research, I have selected the writings of the Israeli prize winning author, Rabbi Haim Sabato.³ In addition to his rare literary abilities, Rabbi Sabato is a leading Talmudic scholar.⁴ Sabato has published numerous volumes and countless articles in the area of Jewish law and philosophy. To date, Sabato has written four literary works. These works are male centered, thus availing the opportunity to examine Jewish fatherhood. Since most of the characters are observant and well versed in the tradition, they serve as good examples of the Jewish father as intended by the tradition.

Sabato's mastery of the Hebrew language is unique. He seamlessly weaves Modern Hebrew expression with Biblical phrases, Midrashic imagery, and liturgical poetry. By all counts, Sabato is a prime choice for this research.

This research will present an overview of fatherhood, covering a large range of fathering behavior as described in the tradition. The information will be taken from classic Jewish sources, and supplemented by current research on fatherhood studies.

³ Born 1952, Cairo.

⁴ Biographical details to follow.

Since Sabato is a contemporary author, biographical volumes have not been written about his life or literary works. This research will present a biographical overview and a summary of literary achievements based on articles and personal interviews. It will present a close reading of the four literary works with full analysis of the relevant characters, concentrating on the issues of fatherhood. The cited references from the four works will be expanded to show their connection to the tradition's view of fatherhood. The research will culminate in a cross-reference analysis to try to establish a correlation between the author's traditional background and his portrayal of the father.

The research is based on the original Hebrew text of the author. The language employed in the body of the thesis is English. Quotes from primary traditional sources and from Sabato's works will be in Hebrew.

Section 2

The Concept of Male and Female

2.1 Definitions and Differences

The universal father is a multi-faceted figure, endowed with many attributes. I will first examine some of the basic characteristics ascribed to the terms male and female. I will then explore the literal definitions of the term father.

The male figure is typically presented as a symbol of strength. Historically men were valued for their physical prowess. The stronger the man, the more influence he had on others. Countless personalities, after proving themselves on the battlefield, moved effortlessly into positions of leadership. In modern Israel, for example, many of the generals of the Israeli army have been elected prime minister.

There are numerous words used in reference to man and his most inherent characteristics: homo-sapiens, male, masculine, and virile. Beyond the sexual orientation and drive, these descriptions of man point to his physical strength. The word virile is defined as:

Virile,⁵

Adjective

Definitions:

1. of, relating to, or having the characteristics of an adult male
2. (of a male) possessing high sexual drive and capacity for sexual intercourse
3. of or capable of copulation or procreation

⁵ *Collins English Dictionary, 9th Revised Edition* (Glasgow, Scotland: Harper Collins, 2007).

4. strong, forceful, or vigorous

The association of the male with the concept of strength is inherent in its definition. It was the man who warded off predators, fought for territory, and protected the home. Those who proved themselves capable in these areas gained the respect of society. Some cultures held physical tests for young males as a rite of passage into adulthood.⁶ These tests may have included acts of bravery, agility, and strength. The maturing male had to prove that he had, indeed, become a hardened adult and was no longer an inexperienced child. He could now be relied upon to meet the challenges and hardships of the adult world.

The second aspect of virility refers to the sexual drive of the male. Spawning numerous offspring was seen as a sign of masculine achievement. In some cultures, men married numerous wives to satisfy their sexual appetite, and to produce many children. Kings flouted their large harems as a sign of their power and wealth.⁷ As an example in current times, polygamy is still prevalent amongst Bedouin families, and many other African cultures.

The definition of the word *female* also reveals characteristics beyond the physical anatomy of the woman.

Female⁸

Adjective

Definitions:

- 1a. (1): of, relating to, or being the sex that bears young or produces eggs
(2): *pistillate*

⁶ These traditions are still active in tribal cultures. See Zulu culture.

⁷ See Biblical characters like King David, King Solomon, and King Achashverosh.

⁸ *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 11th Edition* (Springfield, Massachusetts: Merriam Webster Inc., 2003).

- 1b (1): composed of members of the female sex <the *female* population>
 (2): characteristic of girls or women <composed for *female* voices> <a *female* name>
 2: having some quality (as gentleness) associated with the female sex
 3: designed with a hollow or groove into which a corresponding male part fits <the *female* coupling of a hose>

As seen in the second definition above, the female is associated with gentleness. One likely reason for this description is the connection to child bearing and caring. The delicate fetus requires a soft and warm environment in which to develop, and the infant child needs a gentle hand for its care.

In most ancient cultures, women abstained from rigorous activities and depended on the male members of the family for protection in times of danger. Women did not go to war and were not involved in communal leadership. Heavy labor was reserved for the men. Women were typically perceived as delicate, sensitive, and emotional.⁹

Up until the twentieth century, the divide between the sexes created a natural division of labor. Whereas men worked out of the home, the women worked primarily in and around it. The men brought foodstuffs, wheat, animal skins, wool and fuel for the fire. The women, who were usually more skilled and adept at crafts, were responsible for transforming the raw materials into edible foods and garments. The men created a safe and dry haven for the family while the women maintained the organization and cleanliness of the home. Women who went out of the home environment were considered at risk. Although women often assisted during the planting and harvesting seasons, their regular position was in the management of the home.

⁹ Some Talmudic Rabbis castigated the prophetess Deborah for her display of strength, as this was not becoming of a woman in her era.

See Babylonian Talmud, Megillah 14B, Pesachim 62B.

See also Joy A. Schroeder, "Judging Deborah: The Prophetess and Gender Debates through the Centuries," *The Bible and Interpretation* (2014), accessed February 11, 2013.

<http://www.bibleinterp.com/articles/2014/04/sch388015.shtml#sdfootnote16sym>

2.2 Gender Difference in Jewish Sources

The Jewish tradition refers to this gender difference in numerous sources. The woman was considered the pillar of the home. The early sources convey that it was dangerous or suspicious for a woman to wander out. The man was responsible to bring food and materials, and provide protection for the home. I will cite examples from Biblical and Rabbinic literature.

2.2.1 Inner Glory

כָּל כְּבוֹדָהּ בֵּית מְלֶכֶת פְּנִימָה, מִמִּשְׁבְּצוֹת זָהָב לְבוּשָׁה.¹⁰

The literal translation of this verse is that a woman's greatest distinction and honor lies in her remaining within. The word פנימה literally means inside, meaning that a woman's glory is found in the home. The message of this literal interpretation is that the woman should not look for feelings of importance and significance outside the home. This explanation clearly delineates the distinction between men and women in early times.

This verse could be interpreted in a more symbolic way. The woman's glory, or her physical beauty, should remain פנימה, or covered. Women who behave modestly and do not expose their physicality will receive a great reward. The woman's body should remain private, reserved for herself and her husband, not to be exposed in the public eye.

Based on this verse, the Midrash discusses an example of a woman named Kimchit. Kimchit was blessed with seven sons, each of whom was appointed High Priest. This strange occurrence aroused the curiosity of the Rabbis. When the Rabbis asked what she did to deserve such a reward, she explained that she was extremely careful in regards to her personal modesty. She never exposed a hair on her head, even in the confines of her home.

¹⁰ Psalms 45:14

כל כבודה בת מלך פנימה, ממשבצות זהב לבושה. אשה שהיא מצנעת עצמה, אפילו היא ישראלית, ראויה היא שתינשא לכהן ותעמיד כהנים גדולים שנאמר, 'ממשבצות זהב לבושה'.

שבעה בנים היו לקמחית וכולן שימשו בכהונה גדולה. נכנסו חכמים אצלה. אמרו לה: מה מעשים טובים יש בידך? אמרה להם כך: יעזרו עלי אם ראו קורות ביתי שערות ראשי... קראו עליה הפסוק הזה: כל כבודה בת מלך פנימה.¹¹

2.2.2 Delegations of Men

On their journey to Canaan, the Israelites passed along the borders of Ammon and Moab. The common practice was to offer bread and water to foreign tribes that were passing through. Ammon and Moab outright refused to provide these basics to the Israelites. The Torah responds to this inhospitable gesture in the following fashion:

ד לא-יבא עמוני ומואבי, בקהל א-דני: גם דור עשירי, לא-יבא להם בקהל א-דני עד-
עולם. ה על-דבר אשר לא-קדמו אתכם, בלחם ובמים, בדרך, בצאתכם ממצרים;
ואשר שכר עליך את-בלעם בן-בעור, מפתור ארם נהרים--לקלקלך. ו ולא-אבה א-דני
א-להיך, לשמע אל-בלעם, ויחפז א-דני א-להיך לך את-הקללה, לברכה: כי אהבך, א-
דני א-להיך. ז לא-תדרש שלמים, וטבתם, כל-ימיה, לעולם. ח לא-תתעב אדמי, כי
אחיד הוא; לא-תתעב מצרי, כי-גר היית בארצו. ט בנים אשר-יולדו להם, דור
שלישי--יבא להם, בקהל א-דני.¹²

An Ammonite and a Moabite will not be allowed to marry into the Assembly of God. Even after ten generations, they will not be allowed to marry into the assembly, for all of eternity. Because of the incident of not greeting you with bread and water, on the way, as you left Egypt. [EL]

The Torah established a law forbidding marriage with a convert from the tribes of Ammon and Moab. Even ten generations will not purge the blemish on this tribe. They will never be allowed to join the community of God. The stated reason is that these tribes did not offer bread and water to the Jewish people as they peacefully walked by their border. By ignoring this practice,

¹¹ Midrash Rabbah, Numbers 1:10

¹² Deuteronomy 23:4-9

Ammon and Moab proved themselves unworthy of marrying the children of Abraham.

The Rabbis clarify that only the males of these tribes would be prohibited from marrying. The women, however, would be permitted. The reason explained is that the males were the ones who customarily met strangers at the borders. The women would not have been sent out to greet strangers and were, therefore, not guilty of this offense.

אמר לו (לשאול) דואג האדומי, עד שאתה משאיל עליו אם הגון הוא למלכות אם לאו שאל עליו אם ראוי הוא לבוא בקהל אם לאו, מאי טעמא דקאתי מרות המואביה. אמר לו אבנר תנינא, עמוני ולא עמונית, מואבי ולא מואבית... דמפרש טעמא דקרא על אשר לא קידמו אתכם בלחם ובמים, דרכו של איש לקדם ולא דרכה של אשה לקדם. היה להם לקדם אנשים לקראת אנשים ונשים לקראת נשים! אישתיק.¹³

This incident shows the culture of early times regarding the protection of women. The Moabites behaved according to the norms of ancient society. The women were not put in compromising situations. They remained at home while the men dealt with external affairs.

2.2.3 Dina, Daughter of Jacob and Leah

In the Book of Genesis we read the story of Dina, daughter of Jacob.

א ותצא דינה בת-לאה, אשר ילדה ליעקב, לראות, בבנות הארץ. ב וירא אתה שכם בן-חמור, החוי--נשיא הארץ; ויקח אתה וישכב אתה, ויענה. ג ותדבק נפשו, בדינה בת-יעקב; ויאָהב, את-הנער, וידבר, על-לב הנער. ד ויאמר שכם, אל-חמור אביו לאמר: קח-לי את-הילדה הזאת, לאשה. ה ויעקב שמע, כי טמא את-דינה בתו, ובניו היו את-מקנהו, בשדה; והחרש יעקב, עד-באם.¹⁴

In this story Jacob's daughter, Dina, ventures out of the protected home environment to meet some of the local girls. The chapter begins with the words "“ ותצא דינה בת לאה “, and Dina the daughter of Leah went out”. The next detail in the story describes how Dina is raped by Sh'chem, the prince of the

¹³ Babylonian Talmud, Yevamot 66b

¹⁴ Genesis 34:1-5

Hivite tribe. The Biblical commentators try to find a clue to explain what caused this unusual incident.

In his Biblical commentary, Rashi¹⁵ asks, “Why did the Torah refer to Dina as the daughter of Leah, and not the daughter of Jacob?” In Scripture, listing the lineage from the mother is a break from the norm. Quoting from a Midrashic source, Rashi explains that this change in the wording is significant. The tragic episode is somehow connected to the fact that she was Leah’s daughter.

בת לאה - ולא בת יעקב? אלא על שם יצאמה נקראת בת לאה. שאף היא יצאנית
היתה, שנאמר: ותצא לאה לקראתו, ועליה משלו המשל כ”אמה כבתה”¹⁶.

Rashi explains that Dina was influenced by her mother Leah’s tendency to be a יצאנית, one who wanders out of the home. Rashi supports this by referring to an earlier story. In this incident, Leah ventured out of the home environment intending to be the first to greet Jacob on the path, and win his affection for the night.

ויבא יעקב מן-השדה, בערב, ותצא לאה לקראתו ותאמר אלי תבוא, פי שָכַר שְׁכַרְתִּיךְ
בְּדוֹדָי בְּנֵי; וישָׁכַב עִמָּה, בַּלַּיְלָה הוּא.¹⁷

And Jacob came out of the field in the evening, and **Leah went out** to meet him, and said, Thou must come in unto me; for surely I have hired thee with my son’s mandrakes. And he lay with her that night.¹⁸

Although Leah’s intentions may have been noble, as she wished to conceive another child for Jacob, this “going out” was, nevertheless, viewed as being inappropriate. Rashi concludes his comment with an adage that was later coined from this incident. The prophet Ezekiel states, “Like mother, like daughter”¹⁹. In the same way that Leah behaved inappropriately, so too did

¹⁵ Rashi: Acrostic for Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki, Biblical and Talmudic commentator, Worms, France, 1040–1105

¹⁶ Rashi, Genesis 34:1

¹⁷ Genesis 30:16

¹⁸ King James Bible

¹⁹ Ezekiel 16:44

her daughter Dina. The Torah is suggesting that this was the underlying cause of the tragedy.

It is clear from this incident that there existed a culture of sheltering and protecting the women. In certain cultures it was considered improper for women to roam freely in society. Those who did so placed themselves at risk.

2.2.4 Three Precautions, Three Blessings

The Mishnah Tractate Shabbat delineates the three religious commands that women must observe carefully. Women who were lax in these areas could be exposed to danger during child birth. The Mishnah states:

על שלוש עבירות נשים מתות בשעת לידתן--על שאינן זהירות בנידה, ובחלה,
ובהדלקת הנר.²⁰

The three warnings involve the laws of family purity (abstinence during the menstrual cycle), the offering of the dough for the Priest, and the lighting of the Shabbat candles. The woman is warned to be especially careful in these areas because the spiritual health of the home relied on them. To this day, family purity, dietary laws, and Shabbat observance are still major pillars in the traditional Jewish home.

This is another example of how women were perceived in ancient times as primarily connected to the home. Those who were lax in performing these duties were considered more vulnerable to mishap. Men were not given responsibility in these areas, as their main role was performed outside of the home.

2.2.5 Helpmate or Opponent

The Talmud discusses the creation of Eve, the first woman. The Bible uses an ambiguous term when introducing the helpmate for Adam. The Talmud quotes the verse:

²⁰ Mishnah Shabbat, 2:6

וַיֹּאמֶר יְ-הוָה אֱ-לֹהִים, לֹא-טוֹב הָיְתָה הָאָדָם לְבַדּוֹ; אַעֲשֶׂה-לוֹ עֵזֶר כְּנֶגְדּוֹ.²¹

And the Lord God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him'.²²

The Talmud questions the meaning of the phrase עֵזֶר כְּנֶגְדּוֹ. If the woman is meant to be a help, how can she be כְּנֶגְדּוֹ, opposing him? The Talmud proposes numerous answers. In one of the attempts, the following story is related:

אשכחיה רבי יוסי לאליהו א"ל כתיב אעשה לו עזר. במה אשה עוזרתו לאדם? א"ל:
אדם מביא חיטין. חיטין כוסס? פשתן. פשתן לובש? לא! נמצאת מאירה עיניו
ומעמידתו על רגליו.²³

Rabbi Yossi met Elijah, the prophet. He said to him, "What does it mean a helpmate? With what can a woman help the man?" Elijah answered him, "When a man brings home wheat, does he chew the wheat? When he brings home flax, can he dress himself in flax? No. It turns out that the woman brings light to his eyes and stands him on his feet." [EL]

Rabbi Yossi questioned the role of the woman as a helpmate to man. Wasn't man capable of doing his work on his own? Besides, the woman may not be capable to assist him in many of the heavier tasks. The woman was made of different fiber. How could she possibly do what he does?

Elijah corrects Rabbi Yossi. His understanding of the woman's role was wrong. The woman was not destined to perform the same duties as man. She was introduced to man to refine and to enhance what he does. She has a completely different set of capabilities and talents. They will ultimately bring light to his eyes and put him upright.

The message between the lines is apparent. According to the Biblical narrative, from the time of Adam and Eve there existed a distinct mission for each gender. The man would be the one to provide the raw materials. He

²¹ Genesis 2:18

²² King James Bible

²³ Babylonian Talmud, Yevamot 63A

would have to weather the elements and deal with the heavy work outside the home. The woman was based in the home. Her mandate was to nurture the children and transform the raw supplies into edible food and clothing. This arrangement was prevalent in most cultures for thousands of years.

Section 3

The Concept of Fatherhood

A boy needs a father to show him how to be in the world. He needs to be given swagger, taught how to read a map so that he can recognize the roads that lead to life and the paths that lead to death, how to know what love requires, and where to find steel in the heart when life makes demands on us that are greater than we think we can endure.²⁴

A father has to be a provider, a teacher, a role model, but most importantly, a distant authority figure who can never be pleased. Otherwise, how will children ever understand the concept of God?²⁵

3.1 Etymology of Father

In this section I aim to define the term father and present various interpretations as to the role and characteristics that the father figure typically assumes.

The word father is a more recent term, appearing around the fifteenth century. It can be traced back to similar sounding words dating back to the 900's. Examples of these are: Old English *fæder*, which meant father, male ancestor, from Proto-Germanic *fader*, Old Saxon *fadar*, Old Frisian *feder*, Dutch *vader*, Old Norse *faðir*, Old High German *fater*, German *vater*, from PIE *pəter*, Sanskrit *pitar*, Greek *pater*, Latin *pater*, Old Persian *pita*, and Old Irish *athir*. The earlier term for father stems from the ancient Aramaic word *abba*, meaning father or wise sage.

²⁴ Ian Morgan Cron, *Jesus My Father, the CIA and Me: A Memoir of Sorts* (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, 2011).

²⁵ Stephen Colbert, *I am America (and So Can You)* (New York: Grand Central Publishing, 2009).

The basic definition of father is the male who contributes his sperm to conceive a child. In this regard, one could be the father of a child without ever meeting him/her. The father is the root, or source of the child. In this usage, the word father is also used to describe one who is responsible for an invention or an idea. The group of men who established the new country in America were known as the founding fathers. Alexander Graham Bell would be considered the father of the telephone. The father is the inspiration or the originator.

The term father is used in another context. When someone offers assistance, protection, or guidance to another, his behavior is described as fatherly, even though the recipient is not his biological child. In contrast with the spark or initial inspiration aspect of fathering, this usage of the term connotes a long standing relationship, based on trust and loyalty. It is a universal understanding that a normative father would never forsake his own flesh and blood. The verse in the Psalms states:

כַּרְחִים אָב, עַל-בְּנֵימִים-- רַחֵם יְ-הוָה, עַל-יִרְאָיו.²⁶

Like as a father pitieth *his* children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him.²⁷

When pleading to God to forgive the people for their misgivings, the Psalmist urges God to act like a human father. The premise of the analogy is the understanding that the human father will always show compassion to his child. Even when the child goes against his will, the father's love and compassion for the child will always remain intact. Therefore the father is the prime example of the caretaker, always there to protect and provide.

As stated above, the term man hints at the potential for physical strength, yet it does not suggest how the strength is applied. The term father implies the channeling of the masculine strength for the protection and care of the young,

²⁶ Psalms 103:13

²⁷ King James Bible

ensuring the continuity of the species. Therefore, one who assumes responsibility for the growth and wellbeing of another may be described as acting fatherly.

The term father is often reserved for figures of prominence. God is referred to as the Heavenly Father. In the Christian faith, the term father is used when addressing a priest. The senators of ancient Rome were called fathers (pater). In the Jewish tradition, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are referred to as the three Avot, or fathers. The Mishnah contains a book entitled Pirkei Avot, or Chapters of the Fathers. This work is a compilation of wise sayings from the Rabbis who lived in the time of the Second Temple. In all of these examples the term father is used as the source of wisdom and guidance for life. It is comforting for even the most self-sufficient adult to be reminded that he/she may always rely on the wisdom of the “fathers” as a source of inspiration and direction in life.

Many languages have additional, less formal names for the father. Some of these names are dad, papa, baba, or tata. These words may have come from the early babbling of babies. They were most likely coined out of convenience, as these were the easier sounds for the young child to make. In some cultures, children were encouraged to address their fathers with the more formal title, father, as a sign of respect. Names like dad or pa may have been considered too casual, displaying a lack of reverence.

In the Jewish tradition, the term used for father is Abba.

אבא, Abba is not Hebrew, the language of liturgy, but Aramaic, the language of home and everyday life ... We need to be wary of the suggestion ... that the correct translation of Abba is “Daddy.” Abba is the intimate word of a family circle where that obedient reverence was at the heart of the relationship, whereas Daddy is the familiar word of a family circle from which all thoughts of reverence and obedience have largely

disappeared ... The best English translation of Abba is simply “Dear Father.”²⁸

3.2 Hebrew Letters: Shapes, Numbers, and Meaning

The Hebrew alphabet has many layers of understanding. Even the shape of the letters, their order, and numeric value provide insight and meaning.

The abbreviated Hebrew word for father is אב, comprised of the first two letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Perhaps this is suggesting that fathering is a basic and primary activity.

The letter Aleph represents the number one. The Jewish tradition is founded on the principle of monotheism, the belief in One God. The Torah commands to recite daily the verses of the Shema, “Hear Oh Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One”,²⁹ which serves as a daily reminder to the existence of the One God. The letter Aleph is equal to the number one and thus represents the holiness of God above, far removed from the physical limitations of this world. Graphically, the Aleph is written by combining two letter Yuds on both sides of a slanted Vav.³⁰

א

These three letters together have a numerical value of twenty six, the same number of the Tetragrammaton, the four letter name of God: Yud-Hey-Vav-Hey. The name of the letter, Aleph, is also similar to the word אלוף, or champion, hinting to the omnipotence of the Almighty God.

²⁸ Thomas A. Smail, *The Forgotten Father* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1980).

²⁹ Deuteronomy 6:4

³⁰ The letter Yud is the tenth letter of the alphabet, and the letter Vav is the sixth. The numerical value of two Yuds and one Vav is 26.

The letter Bet signifies the creation, as in the word בריאה. The Torah begins with the words: בראשית ברא אלוקים, “In the beginning God created”.³¹ Bet also represents ברכה, blessing. Without God’s blessing, the world would not be able to exist and flourish. In numerical value the letter Bet is two, representing the shift from singular to plural. This duality is the beginning of diversity in the world: Male and female, heaven and earth, light and darkness. Only God Himself is One. In essence, the letter Bet represents the physical aspects of this world.

What happens when the Aleph and Bet join together? The lofty, spiritual energy represented by Aleph requires a physical vehicle to fulfill its mission. Aleph represents the Divine Being that existed prior to creation. Bet represents the world that was created. This union of spirit and body, the Aleph and the Bet joining together, form the word אב, or father. The father essentially continues the work of creation. The desired result is בן, a child. These two words combined spell אב-בן, a stone. A stone is a symbol of permanence. The son represents the father’s striving for permanence in this world.

ב

The letter Bet also represents the word Bayit, or home. The vehicle to bring a child into this world is the Bayit. Even in its shape the Bet represents the home. The mouth of the Bet, like the doorway of a home, remains open. Like the example set down by Abraham, a home is a place to avail assistance to those in need. At the bottom, the Bet is not rounded. It has a small tail pointing backwards. This tail appears to be pointing back towards the letter Aleph, a reminder of its mission. The Jewish home, or Bayit, serves as a vehicle to bring the Divine light, Aleph, into the physical realm.³²

³¹ Genesis 1:1

³² Based on Michael L. Munk, *The Wisdom in the Hebrew Alphabet* (Brooklyn, New York: Mesorah Publications, 1983).

Section 4

Fatherhood Studies: Research to Date

As stated earlier, this research is not based in sociology or psychology, rather in the traditional concept of the father as manifest in Jewish sources and Hebrew literature. However, it is relevant to present a brief overview of fatherhood studies during the past fifty years. During this era of massive change, the role of the father has been redefined. Some of the main observations and findings of these studies may be pertinent to the conclusions of this research.

The social scientists involved in family research and child development initially focused their efforts on the mother-child relationship. It was assumed that the child was influenced most by his/her predominant caretaker. In the introduction to the fourth edition, Lamb recalls the leanings of his colleagues in the early years of fatherhood research.

When the first edition of this anthology was published in 1976, most social scientists doubted that fathers significantly shaped the experiences and development of their children, especially their daughters.³³

Similar sentiments were expressed by the British organization for civil education Civitas.

In the past, psychologists studying the development of children focused almost exclusively on children's relationships with their mothers. Today, they have come to agree that fathers play a unique and crucial role in nurturing and guiding children's development. Many experts now

³³ Michael Lamb, *The Role of the Father in Child Development*, Fourth Edition (Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley and Sons, 2004).

believe that fathers can be just as nurturing and sensitive with their babies as mothers.³⁴

This earlier perspective stemmed from the fact that most mothers remained at home to attend to the children while the fathers worked outside the home environment. The father's influence was perceived as minimal. Talbot suggests that the onset of industrial capitalism encouraged this arrangement.

The growth of industrial capitalism and market economies has often been attributed to the decline of the household economy and the development of "separate spheres" wherein the family (home) became disengaged from the workplace. As a result, "modern" marriage and family life became delineated by a separation of "public" and "private" realms. This separation gave rise to a new set of parental roles – the domesticated "housewife" and the undomesticated "breadwinner."³⁵

The women's rights movement forged many changes in the way women were perceived. Women began to pursue advanced degrees, and aspired to high level employment. Yet, in the 1950's, trends that were set in motion by the earlier women's movements were regressing and the majority of women preferred to stay at home. After WW2, the typical portrayal in the media, television and the movies regarding the American woman, was the loyal housewife and mother. A career woman was considered unusual at that time.

They learned that truly feminine women do not want careers, higher education, political rights -- the independence and the opportunities that the old-fashioned feminists sought for.... All they had to do was devote

³⁴ K. Pruett, *The Nurturing Father* (New York: Warner Books. 1987). Cited in "How Do Fathers Fit In," *The Institute for the Study of Civil Society* (United Kingdom, 2005), accessed February 11, 2013. <http://www.civitas.org.uk/hwu/fathers.php>;

³⁵ Stephen Talbot, "From Here to Paternity", *Family Matters* No. 72 (Australian Institute of Family Studies, Summer 2005), accessed February 11, 2013. <http://www.aifs.gov.au/institute/pubs/fm2005/fm72/st.pdf>

their lives from earliest girlhood to finding a husband and bearing children.³⁶

Studies of mothers in the United States during the 1950's provide clear evidence to the clear role distinction between men and women.³⁷ During this period, higher education institutions and the work force were in complete harmony with this view. To marry and have children were idealized, and those who did not subscribe to this lifestyle were considered strange and selfish. The average marrying age was twenty, and most couples began having children right away. The maintenance of the children was entirely the responsibility of the mother.

Fewer women attended college than their male counterparts. Statistics of college enrollment support this tendency of women to remain at home. The following shows the major changes that took place in college enrollment over the course of forty years.

The postwar period³⁸ has seen an explosion of college enrollment by women. In 1947 there were only 523,000 women enrolled in college. By 1988 that number was 13.7 times greater, a total of 7,166,000.³⁹

During that period, women were more likely to be rejected from doctoral studies. The training of women seemed fruitless, as most of the women were going to stay at home and rear their children.

³⁶ Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1963), 16.

³⁷ Brett Harvey, *The Fifties: A Women's Oral History* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1993).

Eugenia Kaledin, *Daily Life in the United States, 1940-1959: Shifting Worlds* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2000).

Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound* (New York: Basic Books Inc., 1988).

³⁸ Spanning a period of five decades.

³⁹ J. H. Bishop, "The explosion of female college attendance," *CAHRS Working Paper #90-25* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University, School of Industrial Labor Relations, Center for Advanced Human Resource Studies 1990, accessed February 11, 2013).

<http://digitalcommons.ilr.cornell.edu/cahrswp/390>

In the 1950's, one woman interviewed about her educational experience expressed views typical to this period. Although anecdotal, this quote captures the spirit of the broader society.

I now realize that in the back of my mind there was always the assumption, even when I was getting my graduate degree, that any work I did was temporary, something to do until I assumed my principal role in life which was to be the perfect wife and mother, supported by my husband.⁴⁰

The same woman graduated summa cum laude in 1956 from Smith College with a major in economics. Although accepted to Harvard business school, she opted to pursue a doctorate in education, as it better suited her dream of getting married and raising a family.

The above findings make it clear why family research during those years focused on the role of the mother. The father was not seen as a significant factor in the child's development. Fatherhood studies would only begin to emerge during the 1960's and 1970's.⁴¹

In the past few decades the dividing lines have faded. Women began to play an important role in every facet of society and were no longer encouraged to stay at home. The title of provider was no longer reserved for the fathers. With mothers carrying half of the financial burden, fathers began to share the duties and responsibilities of the home. This new arrangement created a new reality in child-rearing. Mothers and fathers could no longer behave in the ways that their parents and grandparents did before them.

As new norms were established, fathers were examined as to the quantity and quality of their interactions with their children. Terms such as father interaction, accessibility, and responsible fathering were used in measuring fathering behavior. The research provided a list of key fathering behavior,

⁴⁰ Brett, *Fifties: A Women's Oral History*, 50.

⁴¹ Lamb, *Role of the Father in Child Development*.

such as: provider, disciplinarian, teacher, protector, supporter, caretaker, and co-parent.⁴² Other studies highlighted these aspects of fathering: financial support, emotional support, caregiving, playful activities, teaching life skills, discipline, providing love and affection, and protecting.⁴³

In summary, the changes in society have helped create a new perspective on fatherhood. Fifty years ago, fathers were not even considered a significant factor in the development of the children. As fathers became more involved, scientists were able to recognize the father's contribution towards raising well adjusted, confident children.

4.1 Family at Risk

In the area of family studies, the topic of divorce and its impact on children has been researched extensively. Since the 1970's, the rate of divorce has soared to alarming heights. As a result, the numbers of children living in single-parent homes has escalated. This trend has had a major impact on family life. The role and influence of the father has been marginalized. *Absentee fathering* became a recurring phrase in family studies research. The following provides evidence as to the drastic shifts that have transpired.

According to 2011 U.S. Census Bureau data over 24 million children live apart from their biological fathers. That is 1 out of every 3 (33%) children in America. Nearly 2 in 3 (64%) African American children live in father-absent homes. One in three (34%) Hispanic children, and 1 in 4 (25%)

⁴² S. B. Olmstead, T.G. Futris, and K. Pasley, "An exploration of married and divorced non-resident men's perceptions and organization of their father role identity", *Fathering: A Journal of Theory, Research, and Practice about Men as Fathers*, 7. (Harriman, Tennessee: Men's Studies Press, Fall 1998), 249-268.

⁴³ J. A. Summers, et al., "Qualitative Study in Four Early Head Start Communities," *Infant Mental Health Journal*, Volume 20 (Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley and Sons, 1998), 291-304.

white children live in father-absent homes. In 1960, only 11% of children lived in father-absent homes.⁴⁴

There are many ramifications of the new family status, especially the impact on the children. Statistics point to a connection between father absence and children living in poverty, drug abuse and delinquency. Noticing the patterns and growing percentages of failure amongst these children, governments have begun to initiate national programs to reintroduce the fathers into the lives of their children, with the hope to raise their potential for success.⁴⁵

As the rate of divorce continues to rise, the institution of marriage has weakened. As a result, the number of births has dropped steadily. With the high probability of divorce, some couples prefer not to marry altogether. These unwed couples often refrain from having children. Other couples that choose to get married have openly declared that they will not have any children. Terms like DINK, Dual Income No Kids, have been coined to describe this trend of childless couples. All of these factors point to a weakening of the role and mission of parenting in the eyes of the general population.

4.2 Bigger Than Life

On the positive side, the father plays an important role in the development of the children, especially the sons. Some studies have shown a connection between the father's presence in the home and the child's wellbeing.

Children who live apart from their fathers are more likely to be diagnosed with asthma and experience an asthma-related emergency even after taking into account demographic and socioeconomic conditions.

⁴⁴ Cited in U.S. National Fatherhood Initiative (NFI) website.
<http://www.fatherhood.org/media/fatherhood-statistics>

⁴⁵ Since 2000, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (USDHHS) has spearheaded the National Responsible Fatherhood Initiative to support projects that promote fathering as a crucial protective factor for vulnerable children (USDHHS, 2000).

Unmarried, cohabiting parents and unmarried parents living apart are 1.76 and 2.61 times, respectively, more likely to have their child diagnosed with asthma. Marital disruption after birth is associated with a 6-fold increase in the likelihood a child will require an emergency room visit and 5-fold increase of an asthma-related emergency.⁴⁶

The father provides for the son a male role model, helping the son build the foundation for his future integration into society. The son observes carefully how the father behaves towards the mother. The proper example set by the father will assist in the child's ability to connect significantly to women in the future. Fathers are often game players, bringing joy and laughter into their children's lives.

Through repeated positive interaction, the son learns to trust, building confidence and self-esteem. The son learns to feel secure in the firm hold of the father. The father's playfulness speaks to the adventurous, creative side in the child. The son develops an appreciation and admiration towards the father figure, viewing his every act as flawless. The father's giant size adds to the overwhelming sense of power. Clutching one finger with his entire hand, the child senses his own frailness and dependency on the adult male. While growing up, sons often view their fathers as bigger than life. According to psychologists, nursery rhymes which give voice to the child's admiration of the father figure encourage the development of internal defense mechanisms.

Tamar Zahavi, psychologist and therapist, distinguishes between primitive and mature defense mechanisms. The younger child may create idealistic, fantasy size impressions of caretakers (the father) to overcome fear.

לעיתים מופעלת אותה הגנה עצמה ברמות שונות של התפתחות. כך למשל, אידיוליזציה (האדרה) של אהוב כהיבט בריא של יחסי אהבה בוגרים לעומת אידיאליזציה של דמות בה אנו תלויים מבחינה רגשית, שתכליתה לגונן עלינו מפני תחושות של חוסר אונים ופגיעות ובכך היא חוסמת תהליכי התבגרות חיוניים.

⁴⁶ Kristin Harknett, "Children's Elevated Risk of Asthma in Unmarried Families: Underlying Structural and Behavioral Mechanisms". Working Paper #2005-01-FF. (Princeton, NJ: Center for Research on Child Well-being, 2005), 19-27. Cited in firstthings.org/father-facts

דוגמא נוספת היא, הכחשה בריאה בשלבים הראשונים של התמודדות עם אבל, שתכליתה לסייע לנו לעכל בהדרגה את האובדן מבלי להתמוטט, לעומת הכחשה פתולוגית החוסמת תהליכי החלמה וחזרה לחיים.

רמת התפתחות מנגנוני ההגנה היא גם פונקציה של גיל.

“לאבא שלי יש סולם” – שיר הילדים הידוע של תלמה אליגון מבטא תהליכי הפנמה ואידיאליזציה בריאים וחיוניים להתבגרותנו הנפשית, ובשורותיו האחרונות הוא אף רומז להתפכחות הצפויה לכולנו.⁴⁷

These stages of idealization of the male parent allow the child to cope with fear and frustration. At a later stage, the maturing teen slowly recognizes the mortal, human nature of the father, and his imperfections begin to surface. The adolescent realizes that the father may not be able to ward off all evil, and is thrust into a position of self-reliance, self-activation, and independence. Although he will always be the son of, he is now paving the way to becoming the father too, and the circle is complete.

The theory suggested in this article points to the overwhelming importance of sons being reared by fathers. The steps of development and maturation may be based in the father-son dynamic. The idolizing of the father is an important part of growing up. The son who lives in a fatherless environment may be at a disadvantage. A deeper understanding of this process may promote a stronger conviction towards fathering in the eyes of men.

⁴⁷ Nancy McWilliams, *Psychoanalytic Diagnosis: Understanding Personality Clinical Process*. (New York: The Guilford Press, 1994). Cited in <http://www.tamarzahavi.co.il/articles/protection.htm>.

Section 5

Jewish Family Life: Theory and Practice

Judaism is a prescriptive religion, i.e. it contains a wide range of activities and practical guidance for life. Regular study of the Biblical text and Oral Law is one of the core values of an observant lifestyle. Sabbath observance and dietary restrictions are significant components. However, the scope of the tradition reaches far beyond the connection between man and God.⁴⁸ Its complex law system⁴⁹ deals with interpersonal relationships, commerce, damages, contracts, and property law.⁵⁰ Marriage and procreation are seen as a fundamental part of the tradition.

One of the first commandments to appear in the Torah is procreation. The command to be fruitful and multiply is given to Adam and Eve,⁵¹ and repeated to Noah after the deluge.⁵² Although the imperative to proliferate the human race is viewed as a universal obligation, the Jewish tradition goes to great lengths to outline the details and mechanics of this commandment. Marriage and having children are regarded as key components in the life cycle of the observant Jew. Even in current times, for those who follow the tradition, the inclination for getting married remains strong.

5.1 Availability and Stability

Harmony and stability in the spousal relationship lie at the core of good fathering. The decision to raise children should be made responsibly. A fleeting romance, resulting in an unexpected pregnancy, may not prove to be

⁴⁸ Commonly referred to as *בין אדם למקום הלכות*

⁴⁹ Based on the Oral Tradition found in the Talmud, Maimonides, and the Shulchan Aruch (code of Jewish law).

⁵⁰ Examples of *הלכות בין אדם לחבירו*.

⁵¹ Genesis 1:28

⁵² Genesis 8:17

the best arrangement for having a child. The child that is conceived by two consenting and committed adults will have a firm foundation. A man who channels his sexual energy towards creating new life, and not only for the sake of personal gratification, will be more inclined to remain with his partner and care for his child. The decision to voluntarily take part in raising a family may be the most critical part of fathering. It requires maturity, responsibility, and long term thinking. The act of impregnating a woman hardly warrants the title father.

To assume the role of father in its fullest sense, the man does not need to act. He needs to *be*. The man who devotes his life to creating a family, who remains in place to witness the sprouting of a new generation, is the man worthy of the title father. The fulfillment of the responsibilities of the father may not rest in his *ability*, rather in his "*avail*"-ability. The stability of the family may be dependent on the father's "*stay*" ability.

The Jewish tradition is very supportive of this philosophy. The male is encouraged to marry and live harmoniously with his spouse. *Shalom Bayit*, or peace in the home, is a topic discussed frequently in traditional sources.⁵³ Beyond the framework of Jewish law regarding fathering behavior, the tradition upholds the need for a warm and supportive relationship between the husband and wife. Mutual respect and a common purpose are main ingredients for raising well-adjusted children.

The tradition warns the husband against creating a fearful atmosphere in the home. This negative behavior caused a national catastrophe in the Book of Judges.⁵⁴ The husband is also cautioned not to cause his wife to cry.

לעולם יהא אדם זהיר באונאת אשתו שמתוך שדמעתה מצויה אונאתה מרובה .

⁵³ See Jerusalem Talmud, Sotah Ch. 1:4. Rabbi Meir humiliates himself for the sake of Shalom Bayit. He explains that he was emulating God who allowed His Holy Name to be erased in the waters of the Sotah for the sake of Shalom Bayit.

⁵⁴ Babylonian Talmud, Gittin 6B

לעולם יהא אדם זהיר בכבוד אשתו שאין הברכה מצויה בתוך ביתו של אדם אלא
בשביל אשתו שנאמר ולאברם היטיב בעבורה.

אמר להו רבא לבני מחוזא אוקירו נשייכו כי היכי דתתעתרו

- כבדו את נשותיכם כדי שתזכו להתעשר.⁵⁵

One indication of this emphasis on marital harmony and longevity is marital satisfaction. According to a recent study, observant couples tested higher regarding the quality of their relationship and satisfaction in their marriage.

My husband and I celebrated our first anniversary earlier this year. This occasion marked the end of our *shana rishona* (first year), the yearlong “honeymoon” period that our rabbis warn us is anything but. It’s a time of solidifying the relationship, learning to compromise, and adjusting to a spouse’s idiosyncrasies. For Orthodox couples, this first year is often a struggle to navigate the two weeks on, 12 days off cycle of physical intimacy mandated by halakha, or Jewish law. But a new survey indicates that, over the long term, Orthodox Jews have happier marriages than the general public.

According to the Aleinu Marital Satisfaction Survey—an anonymous online study conducted by the Orthodox Union in conjunction with a program of Jewish Family Service of Los Angeles and the Rabbinical Council of California—72% of Orthodox men and 74% of Orthodox women rated their marriages as excellent or very good. By contrast, only 63% of men and 60% of women in the public at large told the General Social Survey, conducted by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago, that they were very happy in their marriages.⁵⁶

5.2 Couple Hood as a Vehicle for Holiness

⁵⁵ Midrash Yalkut Shimoni. Breishit, Chapter 12, Section 68

⁵⁶ T. Snyder, “Despite Much to Kvetch About, They’re Happy. Married Orthodox Jews report high levels of contentment,” *Wall Street Journal* (Feb. 19, 2010), Cited in <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703525704575061442303169342.html>

Fidelity is a basic requirement in the traditional home. The tradition sees the home as a resting place for the Divine Presence. When husband and wife live in trust and harmony, their home is seen as a place of holiness. The couple must strive to preserve and protect the marital bond by not allowing external distractions or temptations to influence them. This aspect of loyalty plays a major role in the mission of Jewish fatherhood.

When discussing the concept of holiness in the Biblical text, the Rabbis explain this abstract term to refer to abstention from inappropriate sexual activity.

א וַיִּדְבֹר יְ-הוָה, אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר. ב דַּבֵּר אֶל-כָּל-עַדַת בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם--
קְדָשִׁים תִּהְיוּ: כִּי קְדוֹשׁ, אֲנִי יְ-הוָה אֱ-לֹהֵיכֶם. ג אִישׁ אִמּוֹ וְאָבִיו תִּירָא, וְאֶת-שִׁבְתֵּי
תִּשְׁמְרוּ: ד אֲנִי, יְ-הוָה אֱ-לֹהֵיכֶם.⁵⁷

רש"י: דבר אל כל עדת בני ישראל -

מלמד שנאמרה פרשה זו בהקהל, מפני שרוב גופי תורה תלויין בה.

קדשים תהיו -

הוּו פְרוֹשִׁים מִן הָעֲרִיּוֹת וּמִן הָעֵבִירָה, שְׂכַל מְקוֹם שֶׁאַתָּה מוֹצֵא גִדְר עֲרוּוָה אֶתָּה מוֹצֵא
קְדוּשָׁה.⁵⁸

Rashi, basing his comment on the Midrash,⁵⁹ highlights the connection between chaste sexual behavior and spirituality. The Torah states, "Be holy", and the Rabbis interpret, "Separate yourselves from illicit relations". The Rabbis understood well the challenges of temptation and the physical attraction between men and women. They acknowledged the existence of sexual desire and promoted satisfying those needs under certain conditions. Although abstinence is not allowed, due to the imperative of procreation, the Rabbis cautioned against wanton, unbridled sexual gratification. They

⁵⁷ Leviticus 19:2

⁵⁸ Ibid. See Commentary Rashi

⁵⁹ Torat Kohanim on the book of Leviticus, 1:1. Vayikra Rabba 24:6

contended that the more one experienced sexual pleasure, the greater the appetite.

מרעיבו שבע, משביעו רעב.⁶⁰

This does not infer that the tradition views sexual behavior in a negative light. Rather, it recognizes the intensity that it can bring, both for the good and the bad. Contrary to other belief systems that promote abstention as a means to spirituality, the Jewish tradition maintains that the physical union of the married couple holds the potential for spiritual growth.

דרש רבי עקיבא : איש ואשה – זכו, שכינה ביניהם. לא זכו, אש אוכלתם.⁶¹

This Talmudic expression hints at the linguistic similarity between the Hebrew words for man, woman and fire. Man is איש, woman is אשה, and fire is אש. The two core letters spell fire, hinting at the potential danger in the union between man and woman. If abused, the relationship can create a damaging fire. The words for man and woman each have an extra letter, one containing the Yud, and the other the Heh. These two letters, י-ה, are the first two letters of the Holy four letter Name of God (י-ה-ו-ה). Rabbi Akiva teaches that when the man and woman learn to take advantage of the intrinsic holiness that lies in their name, they will be blessed with the greatest spiritual reward this world can offer. The potential fiery nature of the male-female relationship is turned to a radiant glow.

One of God's names is "*Hakadosh Baruch Hu*", the Holy one, blessed be He. God is considered the source of holiness. Holiness is not what is deemed important in man's eyes. Rather it is determined by God. There are two types of holiness: intrinsic and behavioral. The behavioral aspect is activated when

⁶⁰ Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin 107A

⁶¹ Babylonian Talmud, Sotah 17B

one adheres to the sexual boundaries of the tradition. The intrinsic holiness manifests in this world in three spheres: person, place, and time.⁶²

5.3 Triad of Holiness

In the Book of Leviticus, Aaron and his sons are chosen to serve as priests in the Tabernacle. The tribe of Levi was selected to assist the priests in the many surrounding duties. These men would be required to observe strict laws regarding contact with impure objects. The Torah ascribes to these men a level of sanctity.⁶³ This spiritual status came with certain privileges as well as responsibilities.

The site of the Temple in Jerusalem is called a מקום קדוש, a Holy place. According to the tradition, the Divine presence rests there.⁶⁴ The Mishnah delineates ten levels of sanctity in regards to geographic space. This list concludes with the קדש הקדשים, the inner chamber of the Holy Temple.⁶⁵

The Jewish yearly calendar is abundant with special days. The Sabbath and holidays are referred to as days of holiness, distinct from the other days through the cessation of work. Yom Kippur is called שבת שבתון, the Sabbath of Sabbaths. Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, is considered the holiest day of the year. This day is noted for its full day fast and solemn prayers.

The קדש הקדשים, inner chamber was barred from entering during the entire year, even to the holiest priest. However, on the fast of Yom Kippur, the Kohen Gadol was granted special permission to perform a unique ceremony in this holy place. The three dimensions of intrinsic holiness - person, space, and time, came together.

⁶² In Kabbalistic terminology: אדם, זמן, מקום

⁶³ See Parshat Emor, Leviticus 21:1

⁶⁴ "המקום אשר בחר לשכן שמו שם..."

⁶⁵ Mishnah Keylim 1:6

5.4 Holiness of the Union between the Sexes

What did the Kohen Gadol see in this chamber? According to the tradition, the chamber housed the Holy Ark with the Ten Commandments, and the first Torah scroll transcribed by Moses. Upon the Ark were two angelic figures made of gold. One was a figure of a young man and one a young woman. These figures were called Cherubs.

אמר רב קטינא: בשעה שהיו ישראל עולין לרגל, מגללין להם את הפרוכת, ומראין להם את הכרובים שהיו מעורין זה בזה, ואומרים להן: ראו חיבתכם לפני המקום, כחיבת זכר ונקבה.

אמר ריש לקיש: בשעה שנכנסו נכרים להיכל, ראו כרובים המעורים זה בזה. הוציאום לשוק ואמרו, ישראל הללו שברכתן ברכה וקללתן קללה, יעסקו בדברים הללו?! – מיד הזילום, שנאמר 'כָּל מְכַבְּדֶיהָ הַזֵּילוּהָ כִּי רָאוּ עֲרוֹתֶיהָ'.⁶⁶

The Cherubs were described as having two positions. These positions were learned from two conflicting verses. The first is found in the initial command of the building of the Tabernacle, and the second is found in a summary of the construction of the First Temple by King Solomon.

כ וְהָיוּ הַכְּרֻבִים פְּרָשִׁי כְּנָפִים לְמַעַלָּה, סִכְכִּים בְּכַנְפֵיהֶם עַל-הַכַּפְּרֶת, וּפְנֵיהֶם, אִישׁ אֶל-אָחִיו; אֶל-הַכַּפְּרֶת--וְהָיוּ, פְּנֵי הַכְּרֻבִים.⁶⁷

...and their faces were one to the other [EL]

יג כְּנָפֵי הַכְּרֻבִים הָאֵלֶּה, פְּרָשִׁים אַמּוֹת עֶשְׂרִים; וְהֵם עֹמְדִים עַל-רִגְלֵיהֶם, וּפְנֵיהֶם לְבַיִת.⁶⁸

...and they faced inward [EL]

The Cherubs either faced towards each other, or they faced towards the inside of the chamber, looking away from each other. If they faced each other, they were locked in an intimate embrace like a man and woman. This was a

⁶⁶ Babylonian Talmud, Yoma 54A

⁶⁷ Exodus 25:20

⁶⁸ Chronicles 2, 3:13

symbolic sign of connection and love between God and the Jewish people. According to tradition, if the Jewish people sinned, the Cherubs would be separate, looking away from each other.

In the holiest place on Earth, on the holiest day of the year, the holiest man (Kohen Gadol, according to the sources) was granted permission to enter the chamber known as the Holy of Holies. If all went according to plan, he witnessed the Cherubs in the position of intimate embrace, locked in union as husband and wife. The intimacy of the two Cherubs was seen as a sign that God was at one with the Jewish people, and that their sins of the past year had been forgiven. The Talmud suggests that the curtain was then pushed aside for the entire nation to witness this expression of love.

This shows how the tradition views sexual intimacy between the male and the female. The symbolism of the Cherubs teaches that there is nothing more sacred in this world than the bond between a man and a woman. At the pinnacle of intrinsic holiness, when the constellation of person, space, and time align, God chose the act of marital intimacy to display his connection to the Jewish people. Intimacy between man and woman is viewed as the highest level of holiness attainable in the physical world.

With this in mind, it may be easily understood why physical intimacy is not a public matter in the traditional culture. Modesty is an important component in the husband-wife relationship. Sabato, as a religious writer, is careful not to include intimate, romantic details in the narrative.⁶⁹

5.5 Mutual Respect

It is essential for the father to maintain a stable and harmonious relationship with his wife. A man who accords honor to his wife will be able to establish a

⁶⁹ This rule is consistent in all of the author's writings, making his works the national choice for the religious high school literature curriculum.

healthy and proper environment in the home. This positive foundation acts like fertile soil for the development of the children.

Maimonides includes the following guidelines for spousal behavior in the laws of marriage:

וכן צוו חכמים שיהיה אדם מכבד את אשתו יתר מגופו ואוהבה כגופו, ואם יש לו ממון מרבה בטובתה כפי הממון, ולא יטיל עליה אימה יתירה ויהיה דיבורו עמה בנחת ולא יהיה עצב ולא רוגז.⁷⁰

וכן צוו חכמים על האשה שתהיה מכבדת את בעלה...ויהיה בעיניה כמו שר או מלך מהלכת בתאות לבו ומרחקת כל שישנא, וזה הוא דרך בנות ישראל ובני ישראל הקדושים הטהורים בזיווגן, ובדרכים אלו יהיה ישובן נאה ומשובח.⁷¹

The man is required to treat his wife better than he would treat himself, speak to her in gentle tones, and not be quick to anger. The wife is also requested to show respect towards her husband, and provide for him according to his wishes. Maimonides suggests that this is the secret for promoting long lasting relationships, a necessary step towards positive parenting.

5.6 Father as a Stabilizing Factor

Consistency gives a child a sense of security. They learn they can rely on their parents and trust that their needs will be met. This helps in the bonding process. Children with consistent parents experience less anxiety. Developing a daily routine with regular rising times, bedtimes, after school schedules, and meal times will cultivate a more peaceful home life.⁷²

In order to avail children a calm and nurturing environment to grow, it is important for the father and mother to live according to patterns and routines.

⁷⁰ Rambam, Acrostic for Rabbi Moshe Ben Maimon, AKA Maimonides, 1135-1204, Cordova, Spain. *Yad Hachazaka, Ishut*: 15:19

⁷¹ *Ibid.* 15:20

⁷² Author Anonymous, "Consistency: An Essential Ingredient", *Parenting Assistance Line* (Tuscaloosa, Alabama: University of Alabama, 2014).
<http://www.pal.ua.edu/discipline/consistency.php>

These repeated patterns make life easier to understand, and can provide the foundation for a sense of security by the children. In the absence of routine, children may find it hard to read the map of the chaotic world around them, causing anxiety and nervousness.

In the early traditional culture, it was common for men to be consistent and dependable. It was typical for men to hold the same position throughout their career. Since men stayed in the same workplace, loyalty at work and work satisfaction may have been more prevalent.⁷³ Work hours were also a constant. The time of leaving the home in the morning and returning home after work were the same every day. This daily rhythm may have been a positive factor in child rearing.⁷⁴

The Jewish religious lifestyle adds many layers to the consistency of routine. The tradition commands daily, weekly, and yearly rhythms, making life predictable and easier to follow. Observant men often prayed in the same synagogue, even in the same seat, day after day, year after year. As each holiday approaches, children begin to anticipate the smells, tastes, sights, and sounds that are unique to that time of year. This allows the children to learn and participate as they grow.

5.7 Availability

Quality time is an important factor in the relationship between parents and children. In the current atmosphere where working hours have been extended and parents are less available, quality time is often compromised. The traditional Jewish lifestyle provides many opportunities for interaction in the family sphere. The complete ban of work and travel on Sabbath and holidays

⁷³ The current status of job stability and longevity is very different from previous generations.

⁷⁴ On a personal note, my father worked as a scientist in a government laboratory for 52 years. His times of departure in the morning and return in the evening were the same throughout his career. As he approaches his 90th birthday, he still remains the prime example of the consistent father.

helps the parents distance themselves from the rigor of the week. The Jewish home is abundant with holiday rituals, traditional foods, and a high concentration of quality family time. The weekly, monthly and yearly rhythm of the Jewish calendar fosters ongoing positive interaction between parents and children. These recurring events with all their sights, sounds, and tastes become an intrinsic part of the home culture.

5.8 The Jewish View of Divorce

No subgroup is immune from the occurrence of disharmony in the home. The Jewish tradition allows for divorce, although as a last resort. The Torah states:

כִּי מֵצָא בָּהּ עֲרוּת דָּבָר, וְכָתַב לָהּ סֵפֶר כְּרִיתוּת, וְנָתַן בְּיָדָהּ וְשָׁלַחָהּ מִבֵּיתוֹ.⁷⁵

When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favor in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house.⁷⁶

The divorce deed is known as a *Get*. The Talmud invests an entire tractate entitled *Gittin* to this complicated process. According to one opinion, based on the literal reading of this verse, divorce was only permitted in the event that the woman was unfaithful. However, this is not the accepted interpretation of the law, and Jewish couples are allowed to divorce in the event of disharmony. Even so, the end of a marriage is always viewed as a tragedy.

אמר רבי אליעזר: כל המגרש אשתו ראשונה, אפילו מזבח מוריד עליו דמעות.⁷⁷

The image of the holy altar shedding tears is indicative of the tradition's view of marriage and family stability. The loss of a family unit is seen as cause for national mourning.

⁷⁵ Deuteronomy 24:1

⁷⁶ King James Bible

⁷⁷ Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin 22A

The Jewish community has experienced many of the changes regarding the family unit that have affected the broader population. Yet, the percentages of traditional couples that end in divorce are lower. After discussing the many reasons for the breakdown of the family over the past fifty years, one researcher writes:

...These changing attitudes towards marriage during the sixties have more recently been compounded by another important factor. Through popular media and sociological studies, Americans have come to realize that marriage is not “all that it is cracked up to be”. The now ubiquitous statistic that over half of all marriages end in divorce leads many young Americans to the ostensibly rational conclusion that marriage is more trouble than it is worth. This conclusion is further justified by the plentiful depiction in the media of people who have miserable marriages but remain married to each other for various external concerns, a depiction which for many Americans is paralleled by first-hand observation and experience. When confronted with such a bleak image of marriage, it is no wonder that Americans today are so fearful of committing themselves to a married lifestyle.

Those of us who belong to the community of Orthodox Jews are, to some degree, protected from this negative trend in attitudes towards marriage. The divorce rate among Orthodox Jewish couples is significantly less than that of the general population, and according to a recent Orthodox Union survey the level of marriage satisfaction seems to be relatively high among Orthodox Jews, diminishing the concern about divorce or unhappy marriages.⁷⁸

A strong marital platform, coupled with the religious imperative for having children, makes the research of Jewish fatherhood a viable topic. If the tradition plays a role in marital satisfaction, the probability of divorce amongst observant couples may be lower. With the abundance of quality time

⁷⁸ Tovia Moldwin, “Marriage in American Society and Orthodox Judaism,” Part 1. (*The Beacon*, New York, 2011), <http://thebeaconmag.com/2011/08/opinions/a-defense-of-marriage-a-yc-students-perspective/>

in the family routine, the opportunity for significant father-child interaction is greater, providing a good framework for analysis. The following chapter will discuss the obligations of the Jewish father, and highlight those aspects of the tradition that foster positive fathering behavior.

Section 6

Paternal Responsibilities According to Jewish Law

The Jewish tradition provides comprehensive guidelines for desired human behavior that span the entire spectrum of human activity from birth to death. These guidelines can be found in the Talmud and in later works of codified Jewish law. Tractate Kiddushin deals with the laws of betrothal and marriage, the obligations of the husband and the duties of the wife. This work also includes laws pertaining to child support and the responsibilities of the parents towards the children, as well as the laws of honoring the parents.

In addition to the basic maintenance and support of the child, the Talmud discusses six specific areas of responsibility borne by the father towards his son. The six areas are meant to ensure that the son grows up to lead a meaningful and productive Jewish life. The following Talmudic excerpts discuss the obligations and the Biblical sources from which they are derived.

משנה: **כל מצות הבן על האב - אנשים חייבין, ונשים פטורות**, וכל מצות האב על הבן - אחד אנשים ואחד נשים חייבין. וכל מצות עשה שהזמן גרמא - אנשים חייבין, ונשים פטורות, וכל מצות עשה שלא הזמן גרמא - אחד האנשים ואחד הנשים חייבין. וכל מצות לא תעשה, בין שהזמן גרמא בין שלא הזמן גרמא - אחד האנשים ואחד הנשים חייבין, חוץ מבל תקיף ובל תשחית ובל תטמא למתים.⁷⁹

The Mishnah opens with an ambiguous statement regarding the responsibilities between parents and children. The Mishnah notes a difference between men and women in this area. The Talmud proceeds to clarify the ambiguity.

גמרא: מאי כל מצות הבן על האב? אילימא כל מצות דמיחייב ברא למיעבד לאבא, נשים פטורות? והתניא: איש - אין לי אלא איש, אשה מנין? כשהוא אומר: +ויקרא יט+ איש אמו ואביו תיראו - הרי כאן שנים! אמר רב יהודה, ה"ק: **כל מצות הבן**

⁷⁹ Babylonian Talmud, Kiddushin 29A

המוטלות על האב לעשות לבנו - אנשים חייבין, ונשים פטורות. תנינא להא דת"ר:
האב חייב בבנו למולו, ולפדותו, וללמדו תורה, ולהשיאו אשה, וללמדו אומנות;
וי"א: אף להשיטו במים; רבי יהודה אומר: כל שאינו מלמד את בנו אומנות -
מלמדו ליסטות. ליסטות ס"ד? אלא, כאילו מלמדו ליסטות.⁸⁰

The Talmud explains that the obligations of the father towards the son are gender specific. Since men are required to perform these actions, they are mandated with fulfilling these obligations for their sons. Therefore, the father is obligated, the mother is exempt. The Talmud cites a Brayta⁸¹ delineating the six major responsibilities of the Jewish father. This list of actions were later codified as accepted Jewish practice in later works of Halacha.⁸²

As this Brayta is very succinct, the Talmud and later commentaries tried to explain the source and mechanics for each of these obligations. One such commentator is known as the Meiri.⁸³ The Meiri presents additional reasons why the women were exempt from performing these six commandments.

אמר המאירי: פירשוה בגמרא כל מצות המוטלות על האב לעשותם לבן כגון למולו ולפדותו אם הוא בכור וללמדו תורה דאומנות ולהשיאו אשה האבות חייבין בכך ולא האמהות שמאחר שאין מצוות בהן לעצמן אינן מצוות בהן לבניהן והרי מילה ופדיון אינן בנקבות ותלמוד תורה נשים פטורות מדכתיב ושננתם לבניך וכן הן פטורות להנשא שאינן מצוות על פריה ורביה ואמנות אע"פ שהאשה צריכה לו מכל מקום דיו להיות כתלמוד תורה וכן שכל כבודה בת מלך פנימה ואם צריכה להזיק את בנה ללמוד אומנות הרי היא צריכה לילך לפני האמנין תמיד לראות בלמודו. ודברים אלו מהם שנתברר חיובם בתורה כגון מילה ופדיון הבן ותלמוד תורה ומהם דברי קבלה כגון נשואין מדכתיב קחו לכם נשים והולידו בנים ובנות וקחו לבניכם נשים ואמנות דכתוב ראה חיים עם אשה אשר אהבת.⁸⁴

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ These sources are referred to as, "Brayta," literally meaning *outside*, as they were excluded from the body of the Mishnah by its compiler, Rabbi Yehudah HaNasi (135–219 CE), yet preserved in the Talmud and in the Tosefta for future reference.

⁸² A term used for the rendering of law in traditional sources. The word is derived from the verb ה-ל-ך, which means to go, or to walk. The Halacha is the chosen path to walk.

⁸³ Rabbi Menachem ben Shlomo Meiri, 1249–1310, Barcelona. Author of Beit HaBechira, commentary on Babylonian Talmud

⁸⁴ Bet HaBechira, Kiddushin 29A.

The Meiri explains that women were not obligated to perform certain tasks for the sons since they themselves were not commanded to fulfill them. There is a concept in Jewish law regarding the status of individuals who are exempt from the performance of a ritual. These individuals may not perform the ritual for someone who is obligated. Only a person who is obligated may do so.

The paternal responsibilities towards the son include circumcision, ceremonial redemption of the first born son, Torah study, arranging a marriage, providing swimming lessons and teaching him a trade. The following is a brief summary of each of these responsibilities.

6.1.1 Circumcision

The father is required to arrange for his son to be circumcised. This ceremony is performed on the eighth day after birth. The obligation of circumcision is derived from the Biblical story of Abraham.

ט וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים אֶל-אַבְרָהָם, וְאָתָּה אֶת-בְּרִיתִי תִשְׁמַר--אֵתָּה וְזָרְעֲךָ אַחֲרָיִךְ, לְדֹרֹתֶם.
י זֹאת בְּרִיתִי אֲשֶׁר תִּשְׁמְרוּ, בֵּינִי וּבֵינֵיכֶם, וּבֵין זָרְעֲךָ, אַחֲרָיִךְ: הַמּוּל לְכֶם, כָּל-זָכָר. יא
וְנִמְלֹתֶם, אֶת בָּשָׂר עֶרְלַתְכֶם; וְהָיָה לְאוֹת בְּרִית, בֵּינִי וּבֵינֵיכֶם. יב וּבֶן-שָׁמֹנֶת יָמִים,
יְמוּל לְכֶם כָּל-זָכָר--לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם: יֶלֶד בְּיַת-וּמְקַנֶּת-כֶּסֶף מִכָּל בֶּן-נֶכֶר, אֲשֶׁר לֹא מִזָּרְעֲךָ
הוּא. יג הַמּוּל יְמוּל יֶלֶד בְּיַתְךָ, וּמְקַנֶּת כֶּסֶף; וְהָיְתָה בְרִיתִי בְּבִשְׂרְכֶם, לְבְרִית עוֹלָם.
יד וְעָרַל זָכָר, אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יְמוּל אֶת-בָּשָׂר עֶרְלָתוֹ--וְנִכְרְתָה הַנֶּפֶשׁ הַהוּא, מֵעַמּוּיָהּ: אֶת-
בְּרִיתִי, הִפֵּר.⁸⁵

At the age of ninety nine, Abraham was commanded by God to perform a circumcision upon himself. This act was described as a ברית, or covenant between God and Abraham. By providing for his son's circumcision, the father is fulfilling his duty of entering him into the covenant between the Jewish people and God.

⁸⁵ Genesis 17:9-14

From Biblical times until today, this ritual has been commonly referred to as “entering the son into the covenant of Abraham, our forefather”. Since only the males are required to have a circumcision, the father is eligible to perform the procedure upon his son. Because women have no personal obligations insofar as circumcision is concerned, they are not responsible for circumcising their sons.

6.1.2 Ceremonial Redemption of the First Born

Under certain circumstances, the father must redeem his first born son. This obligation is derived from the Book of Exodus.

וּפְטָר חֲמוּר תִּפְדֶּה בְּשָׂה וְאִם לֹא תִפְדֶּה וְעִרְפְּתוּ כָּל בְּכוֹר בְּנֵיךָ תִּפְדֶּה וְלֹא יֵרָאוּ פָּנֶי
רִיקִים.⁸⁶

The redeeming of the first born son is connected with the story of the ten plagues in ancient Egypt. The tenth and final plague dealt the Egyptians a heavy blow. The book of Exodus tells us that God smote the firstborn sons and firstborn animals of every Egyptian household. For sparing the firstborn Jewish males, God inducted them into priestly service. All future first born sons were to become the priests representing the Jewish people in the Temple.

According to tradition, this appointment changed after an unfortunate incident occurred in the desert: the worshipping of the Golden Calf. For playing an active role in this sinful event, the first born males were removed from their position and replaced by the sons of Aaron the High Priest. This switch, however, did not remove the sacred status of the first born son.

When the male child is a month old, he is brought before a Kohen. The Kohen takes the child from the father, a symbolic reminder of the boy’s intrinsic holiness. The Kohen asks the father if he intends to take back his son. The father presents the Kohen with five coins, while verbally requesting that the son be returned. The holiness of the son is transferred to the coins and the son

⁸⁶ Exodus 34:20

is redeemed. The redeeming of the first born male on the thirtieth day is considered a Torah obligation.

The responsibility to redeem was given solely to the male parent as Temple service was performed only by men. A woman could not serve, therefore she could not perform the redeeming ceremony.

6.1.3 Education

The study of the Law is considered a Torah command.⁸⁷ The Torah speaks of a constant obligation to study, as well as the obligation to teach the children.

ז וְשִׁנַּנְתֶּם לְבָנֵיכֶם, וְדִבַּרְתֶּם בָּם, בְּשִׁבְתְּכֶם בְּבֵיתְכֶם וּבְלֶכְתְּכֶם בַּדֶּרֶךְ, וּבְשֹׁכְבְּכֶם וּבְקוּמְכֶם.⁸⁸

This Biblical command includes the study of practical knowledge (application of Jewish law in all facets of life), as well as theoretical study, referred to as תלמוד תורה לשמה, study for the sake of study. The obligation begins from the time a boy begins to speak, and continues throughout his entire lifetime.

Continual study has always been a key component in the Jewish lifestyle. Maimonides summarizes the parameters of the command to study the Torah.

קטן - אביו חייב ללמדו תורה... מי שלא למדו אביו, חייב ללמד את עצמו. כל איש מישראל חייב בתלמוד תורה בין עני בין עשיר בין שלם בגופו בין בעל יסורין בין בחור בין שהיה זקן גדול שתשש כוחו. אפילו היה עני המתפרנס מן הצדקה ומחזר על הפתחים ואפילו בעל אישה ובנים חייב לקבוע לו זמן לתלמוד תורה ביום ובלילה שנאמר, "הגית בו יומם ולילה".

גדולי חכמי ישראל היו מהן חוטבי עצים ומהן שואבי מים ומהן סומים ואף על פי כן היו עוסקין בתלמוד תורה ביום ובלילה.

עד אימתו חייב ללמוד תורה? עד יום מותו. שנאמר "ופן יסורו מלבבך כל ימי חיידך", וכל זמן שלא יעסוק בלימוד הוא שוכח.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ As opposed to a Rabbinic enactment

⁸⁸ Deuteronomy 6:7

⁸⁹ Maimonides, Laws of Talmud Torah 1:8-10

In the chapter pertaining to the laws of Torah study, Maimonides begins with the responsibility of the father to teach his son the Torah. From the moment he learns to speak, the child is to be taught the basics of Jewish belief. This introduction shows the importance of transmitting the law from one generation to the next. The father must do his utmost to ensure the continuity of the tradition.

Since men are obligated to study the Torah, the training of the son falls upon the father. He is commanded to train his son in the knowledge and method of Torah study. The Rabbis cite the following verse as the source for this responsibility.

וְלַמְדַתֶּם אֹתָם אֶת בְּנֵיכֶם לְדַבֵּר בָּם בְּשִׁבְתְּכֶם בְּבֵיתְךָ וּבְיַתְדְּךָ וּבְשֹׁכְבְּךָ וּבְקוּמְךָ :⁹⁰

Although the verse refers only to the sons, parents are encouraged to train their daughters in the beliefs, practices, and moral lessons of the tradition. There is no stated obligation to train the daughters in theoretical Torah study.

6.1.4 Marriage

The father must strive to find a suitable wife for his son. A verse in the Prophets is cited as the source for this paternal responsibility.

ד כֹּה אָמַר יְ-הוָה ז'-בְּאוֹת, אֶ-לֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: לְכָל-הַגּוֹלָה--אֲשֶׁר-הִגְלִיתִי מִירוּשָׁלַם, בְּבָלָה. ה בְּנֵי בָתִּים, וְשָׁבוּ; וְנִטְעוּ גִנּוֹת, וְאָכְלוּ אֶת-פְּרִיָן. ו קָחוּ נָשִׁים, וְהוֹלִידוּ בָנִים וּבָנוֹת, וּקְחוּ לְבָנֵיכֶם נָשִׁים וְאֶת-בָּנוֹתֵיכֶם תִּנּוּ לְאִנְשֵׁים, וְתִלְדְּנָה בָנִים וּבָנוֹת; וְרַבּוּ-שָׁם, וְאֵל-תִּמְעָטוּ.⁹¹

In these verses, the prophet Jeremiah is consoling the exiled nation. The First Temple of Jerusalem had been destroyed and the people were taken in captivity to Babylon.⁹² Jeremiah exhorts the people to continue their lives as before: build homes and dwell in them, plant trees and enjoy their fruits,

⁹⁰ Deuteronomy 11:19

⁹¹ Jeremiah 29:4–6

⁹² 422 BCE

marry and have children. Jeremiah goes on to tell the people to find wives for their sons, and to give their daughters to young men. The thrust of his message was the Jewish people must remain vibrant and healthy, even in the direst situations.

The institution of marriage is considered sacred in the Jewish tradition. The act of betrothal is called “Kiddushin” from the word Kadosh, or holy. The father is given the responsibility to make sure that his son lives a life of holiness.

According to tradition, the man is obligated to procreate; the woman is not.⁹³ Since this is the case, it is incumbent upon the father to help his son find a wife.

6.1.5 Swimming

The father is obligated to teach the son how to swim.

...יש אומרים : אף להשיטו בנהר.⁹⁴

...להשיטו בנהר. מאי טעמא? חיותיה הוא.⁹⁵

רש"י: שמא יפרוש בספינה, ותטבע, וימות, אם אינו יודע לשוט.⁹⁶

The common translation of this phrase is “teach him to swim”. The wish to preserve life is a critical component of Jewish tradition. Saving a life supersedes even the strongest commandments. Understanding the Torah’s view of preserving life, it stands to reason that this imperative supports the father’s obligation to teach the child to swim.

⁹³ It is possible that the Torah did not need to create an obligation for the woman in this area, as it may be considered a more natural female tendency to want children. The males, who may not be as naturally inclined, were obligated by law to procreate. Additionally, since child bearing is painful and potentially life threatening, the Torah could not command the women to have children. This would need to be performed willingly.

⁹⁴ Babylonian Talmud, Kiddushin 30B

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Rashi

The father is charged with imparting tools to his son that will enable him to live and to survive in dangerous situations. Since boat travel was common, the son had to learn how to swim in order to prevent accidental drowning. In early times, bathing was also an activity performed in rivers. The danger of drowning was prevalent.

6.1.6 Livelihood

The father is responsible to teach the son a trade.

ללמדו אומנות. מנלן? אמר חזקיה, דאמר קרא: רָאָה חַיִּים עִם-אִשָּׁה אֲשֶׁר-אָהַבְתָּ,
כָּל-יְמֵי חַיֵּי הַבְּלֶדֶת, אֲשֶׁר נָתַן-לָךְ תַּחַת הַשָּׁמֶשׁ, כֹּל יְמֵי הַבְּלֶדֶת: כִּי הוּא חֶלְקְךָ, בַּחַיִּים,
וּבְעַמְלָךְ, אֲשֶׁר-אַתָּה עֹמֵל תַּחַת הַשָּׁמֶשׁ.⁹⁷

אם אשה ממש היא - כשם שחייב להשיאו אשה, כך חייב ללמדו אומנות, אם תורה
היא - כשם שחייב ללמדו תורה, כך חייב ללמדו אומנות.⁹⁸

The Rabbis learned the obligation to teach the son a trade from a verse in the Book of Ecclesiastes. The verse advises the reader to examine his *“life”* alongside his *“wife”*. Life is explained as a source of sustenance.⁹⁹ The word wife is interpreted both literally (a woman) and symbolically (the Torah). In the same way that man must look after his *“wife”* (a woman, or the Torah), so too must he look after his life (livelihood). Since the father is responsible to assist his son in the areas of marriage and Torah study, he must also teach the son a trade.

These six realms of activity relate to the basic requirements for living a Jewish life. Circumcision, the redemption of the first born son and Torah study are all related to spiritual development. The remaining three; marriage, swimming and vocational training, pertain to the physical wellbeing of the son.

6.2 From Generation to Generation: Jewish Continuity

⁹⁷ Ecclesiastes 9:9

⁹⁸ Babylonian Talmud, Kiddushin 30B

⁹⁹ i.e. a trade

Traditionally, fathers trained their sons in the skills of survival: hunting, riding, farming, fending off wild animals, and fighting enemies. In addition to preparing the son for life, it was the father's responsibility to facilitate his spiritual development. The father was the one to share the stories, customs, and beliefs of the tribe. He was responsible for the continuity of the tradition.

In the Jewish tradition, the father is commanded to teach his children the lessons and practices of the Torah. This idea stems back to the time of Abraham, the first Jew. In Genesis we read:

יח ואברהם היו יהיה לגוי גדול ועצום ונברכו בו כל גויי הארץ. יט כי ידעתיי למען
אשר יצוה את בניו ואת ביתו אחריו ושמו דרך א-דני לעשות צדקה ומשפט למען
הביא א-דני על אברהם את אשר דבר עליו.¹⁰⁰

The Torah expresses the motivation for God's choosing Abraham as the forerunner of the Jewish people. "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him."¹⁰¹

This verse lies at the foundation of Jewish fathering. God chose Abraham because he knew he would pass on the message of God to his children after him. The parental promise and dedication to teaching the children is the basis of the relationship between the Jewish people and God.

Another support to this theme is found in the Midrash:

ולכן במתן תורה, כאשר אמר הקב"ה לישראל: תנו לי ערבים שתקיימוהו, כשאמרו
ישראל: אבותינו ערבים לנו, לא קיבלם הקב"ה. אבל כאשר אמרו: בנינו ערבים לנו -
שגם הם ילכו בדרך הטוב והישר - אמר הקב"ה: הם ודאי ערבים טובים.

רבי מאיר אומר בשעה שעמדו ישראל לפני הר סיני א"ל הקב"ה הביאו ערבים
שאתם משמרים את התורה ואני נותנה לכם, א"ל אבותינו ערבים לנו, א"ל אבותיכם
יש לי עליהם, אברהם על שאמר במה אדע, יצחק על שאהב את עשו, יעקב על שאמר

¹⁰⁰ Genesis 18:18-19

¹⁰¹ King James Bible

נסתרה דרכי, א"ל בנינו ערבים לנו, א"ל הם הם ערבים טובים, מפי עוללים ויונקים יסדת עוז, ואין עוז אלא תורה שנאמר ה' עוז לעמו יתן. בשעה שהלוח נתפס ואין לו מה לשלם מי נתפס לא הערב הוי ותשכת תורת א-להיך אשכח בניך גם אני, א"ר אחא גם אני כביכול גם אני מפסיד, מי אמר לפני ברכו לא התינוקות הוי לשוא הכיתי את בניכם מוסר לא לקחו.

בשעה שעמדו ישראל על הר סיני אמר להם הקב"ה: בני אתם, אני נותן לכם את התורה. תנו לי ערבים שתקיימוה. אמרו לו: שמים וארץ. אמר להם: הרי הם מתבטלין, אלא תנו לי את בניכם, אם אינכם מקיימים אותה שאני גוזלם מכם, שנאמר: ותשכח תורת א-להיך, אשכח בניך גם אני.¹⁰²

After the Exodus from Egypt, the Jewish people stood at the base of Mount Sinai. The people experienced a Divine revelation as God conveyed the Ten Commandments. The giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai is considered one of the most defining moments in the course of Jewish history. The Torah comprises the foundation for all Jewish belief and practice. From that moment they would be committed and liable to observe the commandments in full.

Prior to the revelation, God asked the nation for a guarantee, a form of collateral that the Jewish people would remain true to the tenets and commandments of the Torah. A negotiation began. The people offered the forefathers, but were rejected. They offered the heavens and the earth, but God did not accept. Finally the Jewish people placed their most precious possessions on the line: their children. They promised to teach the Torah to their children, and train them in the commandments. God finally accepted.

The Midrash is suggesting that the Jewish people cannot rely on the righteousness of the Patriarchs, or the stability of nature. Even their personal involvement and dedication would not suffice. In order to be deemed worthy of God's Torah, the Jewish people must prove that they are capable of sustaining the tradition for the future. They must commit to dedicating their children to a life of piety and righteousness, the study of Torah, and observance of its commandments.

¹⁰² Midrash Yalkut Shimoni, Jeremiah 2, Passage 267

This later promise by the Jewish people at Sinai was viewed as a continuation of the philosophy of Abraham. God was confident that Abraham would carry forward the belief in the One God. He would guarantee that his children would remain loyal to the mission that he began. This was the deciding factor in God's choosing Abraham. Not his own righteousness, but his willingness to pass the tradition on to his children. At Mount Sinai, the descendants of Abraham reaffirmed their commitment to passing the tradition on to their children. It was this guarantee that convinced God of their worthiness to receive the Torah.

The mission of fatherhood according to the Jewish tradition is clear, as intimated in this Midrash. The father must strive for the continuity of the Torah and its complete fulfillment. The father must educate his son to become a knowledgeable, committed, and responsible member of the Jewish community. Continuity also implies that the father must encourage the son to marry and establish a family of his own.¹⁰³ The other tasks of fathering should be subservient to this goal.

6.3 Traditions of the Father

The continuity of the tradition is a basic premise of the Jewish heritage. Apart from the written set of instructions passed down in the Torah, which are binding on every member of the Jewish people, the Jewish tradition ascribes significant value to behavior of the fathers, even those not dictated by law. This realm of the tradition is referred to as Minhag, or custom, as opposed to Mitzvah, or command. The Rabbis promoted the adherence to these customs using the phrase *מנהג אבותינו בידינו*, the custom of our fathers is in our hands. These practices are important to uphold due to their ancient, and often

¹⁰³ The actual fulfillment of the Biblical command to procreate is when the man has two grandchildren. This shows the importance of fostering family values in one's own children.

obscure origins.¹⁰⁴ Some of the newly established Minhagim were group specific, not receiving equal acceptance by the entire Jewish people. Yet, even those local Minhagim were awarded the backing of the Rabbis. The local customs were granted the status of binding laws.

There are many references to this concept in Talmudic literature. I will cite a few examples:

היזהרו במנהג אבותיכם בידיכם.¹⁰⁵

Be careful with the traditions of your fathers that are in your hands. [EL]

The discussion surrounds the need to observe the second day of Yom Tov (Holy Day) in the Diaspora. This law was originally enacted due to the possibility of doubt regarding the Hebrew date in the distant Jewish communities. Originally, the Jewish calendar was dependent on a court proceeding following the sighting of the new moon. Since the calendar was dynamic, the judges needed to announce the correct date to the public every month. The farther communities took longer to discover when the new moon was established. For this reason, Jewish communities outside of Israel were commanded to observe an extra day of the holidays, so as not to be at risk of transgression (such as eating leavened bread on Passover).

Years later, when the Rabbis established a fixed Jewish calendar, there was no longer doubt as to when the holidays fell out. However, the law to observe two holy days in the Diaspora remained intact. The Talmud suggests that the reason for upholding this custom is מנהג אבותינו בידינו.

רבי שמואל בן נחמן אומר, מאי דכתיב, 'אשא עיני אל ההרים?' אשא עיני אל ההרים למלפני ולעבדני.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ See Daniel Sperber, *Why Jews Do What They Do: The History of Jewish Customs throughout the Cycle of the Jewish Year* (Brooklyn, New York: Ktav Publishers, 1999).

¹⁰⁵ Babylonian Talmud, Beitzah 4A

¹⁰⁶ Midrash Breishit Rabbah, Chapt. 68

Rabbi Shmuel son of Nachman said, "What does the verse mean, 'I will raise up my eyes to the mountain'? (Psalms 121:1). I will raise up my eyes to the *parents* who will teach me and train me in the service of God." [EL]

It is not enough to try to learn and understand what the Torah asks. This Midrash encourages the student to turn to the parents and learn from their actions. The Torah is not a static book, rather a way of life. To be transmitted properly, it is essential to see how it was carried out in real life situations. Do not seek הרים, mountains, rather seek הורים, *parents*.

בני ביישן נהוג דלא הוי אזלין מצור לצידן במעלי שבתא. (בני ביישן נהגו שאף על פי שהיה יום השוק של צידון בערב שבת, והיו יכולים באותו יום לעסוק במסחר כדי להרוויח, בכל זאת החמירו על עצמם ולא הלכו ליום השוק, כדי לא להתבטל מלעסוק בצורכי שבת.) [EL] אתו בנייהו קמיה דרבי יוחנן, אמרו ליה: אבהתיך איפשר להו, אגן לא אפשר לך (באו בנייהם וטענו לרבי יוחנן שיתיר להם ללכת ליום השוק, היות אבותיהם היו עשירים והיה באפשרותם לא ללכת לשוק, אבל אנחנו איננו עשירים וזקוקים לפרנסה, ולגבי צורכי שבת בודאי נספיק לעשות בשעות מועטות אחרי השוק.) [EL] אמר להו: כבר קיבלו אבותיכם עליכן, שנאמר: שמע בני מוסר אביך ואל תטוש תורת אימך.¹⁰⁷

The merchants of Beishan refrained from going to the market place of Sidon on Fridays out of respect for the Shabbat, even though there was ample time to go and return before Shabbat began. The younger generation approached Rabbi Yochanan to ask if they could go and sell at the market on Fridays. They argued that they were much poorer than their fathers, and therefore could not afford to refrain from work. They promised not to be lax in their Shabbat preparations. The response of Rabbi Yochanan was that their fathers had already accepted the stringent custom of not going to market on Fridays. He supported his ruling with the following quote from Proverbs, "Listen my son to the ethical teachings of the fathers and do not forsake the Torah of your mother."¹⁰⁸

The sons were therefore bound to continue this tradition and were not permitted to travel to the market on Fridays.

¹⁰⁷ Babylonian Talmud, Pesachim 50B

¹⁰⁸ Proverbs 1:8

This concept of מנהג אבותינו בידינו is used in many of Sabato's works. The father is perceived as a link in a long chain, carrying over the traditions of his father to his own son. Even when the behavior appears obsolete or irrelevant, the tradition encourages the children to maintain them. This has been a factor in the success of the tradition's continuity over the centuries.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁹ Living in the twenty-first century, the male-centered concept of passing on the tradition does not sound politically correct. Since the research is dealing with ancient text, it is a reflection of a particular era.

Section 7

Rabbi Haim Sabato – His Life and Work

Rabbi Haim Sabato is a contemporary Talmudic scholar, master teacher, and prizewinning author. There is no biographical work to date regarding his personal history. The information presented in this research comes primarily from articles and printed interviews with Sabato and people that are close to him.

7.1 Biographical Details

Haim Sabato was born in 1952 in Cairo, Egypt. His family stems from a long line of Sephardic¹¹⁰ Rabbis who originated from Aleppo, Syria. Sabato's ancestors were noted scholars and religious leaders in the Aleppo community. After the First World War, the community suffered severe economic hardship, causing most of the Jews to relocate. At that time the Sabato family immigrated to Egypt. Sabato's maternal grandfather, Rabbi Aharon Shwekey, served as the head of the Talmudic Academy in Egypt. This grandfather will play a significant role in Sabato's works.

Following the Suez Canal crisis of 1956, the Egyptian leader Gamal Abdel Nasser requested the Egyptian Jews to leave the country. In 1957 the Sabato family moved to the newly established State of Israel, along with thousands of other immigrants from Egypt and other North African countries. Sabato was five years old when he first arrived in Israel.

The young State of Israel made great efforts to accommodate the throngs of new immigrants from all over the globe. Holocaust survivors from Europe

¹¹⁰ The traditions of Sephardic Jewry began in the Near East along the Iberian Peninsula. After the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492, the Sephardic Jews were spread to other parts of Europe and North Africa. Sepharad literally means Spain. However, in modern terms, the word Sephardi refers to Jews from a wide range of Arabic, African, and Mediterranean countries.

joined North African Jews in their search for a new life in the Holy Land. The state provided emergency housing for the new immigrants, hoping to integrate them quickly into Israeli society.

The Sabato family was sent to live in a transit camp called Bet Mazmil¹¹¹ in Jerusalem. This section of Jerusalem is currently known as Kiryat Yovel. Although intended for short term use, the temporary dwellings became permanent homes for many of the struggling immigrant families. The young Sabato spent his formative years in this neighborhood. The colorful tapestry of cultures found in Bet Mazmil held a great influence on Sabato and later became the backdrop for many of his stories.

Intense religious Torah study was part of the Sabato family culture and lifestyle. Although his father struggled to make a living, education of the children always remained a high priority. The young Sabato did not attend the local public school. His parents insisted he travel to attain an advanced religious education. After school, Sabato spent many hours studying with his grandfather, Rabbi Shwekey. The grandfather's genius and passion for Talmudic study were a major influence in his spiritual development.

Sabato was a diligent student. In his spare time he tutored privately, collecting enough money to buy his first set of the Talmud. He excelled in his Talmudic studies and made his first Siyum¹¹² on the entire Babylonian Talmud prior to his high school graduation.

Sabato advanced his Talmudic career in the Yeshivat HaKotel in Jerusalem's Old City. This yeshiva supported active army service as an integral part of the religious studies program. In 1973 Sabato was enlisted into the tank corps and served in the Yom Kippur war. He was wounded in battle in the Golan Heights. In the heat of battle, Sabato took a vow: If he would survive the war,

¹¹¹ The "*Ma'abarah*" Bet Mazmil was established in April 1948 on the southwest edge of Jerusalem.

¹¹² Celebration of completing a volume of Talmud. Sabato completed all sixty volumes at this early age and performed the Siyum on its entirety.

he would dedicate his life to teaching Torah, and open his own Talmudic academy.

After the war, Sabato concluded his rabbinic training in Yeshivat Merkaz HaRav Kook in Jerusalem. He received his rabbinic ordination in 1977. He fulfilled his promise and created the Birkat Moshe Yeshiva in Ma'aleh Adumim, where he continues to teach until today.

Sabato resides in Ma'aleh Adumim, a suburb east of Jerusalem, with his wife Shoshana and their two children, David and Israel Meir.

7.2 Literary Development

Sabato has a passion for learning and a strong command of language. It was never his intention to become a prizewinning author. Even after receiving national awards for his works, he did not change his routine or lifestyle. His main occupation remains Talmudic research and teaching. Sabato did not develop his literary expertise through the mainstream academic system. His training came from his upbringing and the many years of Yeshiva studies.

From the youngest age, Sabato was eager to listen to the legends of his ancestors, as told by his grandfather and other relatives. Sabato collected these stories for his own personal needs. If he wrote them down, they were usually tucked away in his desk drawer, not intended for public viewing. Sabato used these stories as a source of personal inspiration. The stories held great wisdom and examples of true piety, and infused him with a sense of pride for his family lineage.

To Sabato's surprise, some of these stories had true bearing on his own personal life. While trying to investigate the lives of his ancestors, Sabato discovered that he was the center of a drama that started many generations before. Like an archaeologist sifting through layers of rubble, Sabato left no stone unturned to reveal the missing pieces of the plot. The unsuspecting author shared his surprise when he discovered that he was the protagonist of

his own story. His works are like an extensive diary, weaving the tales of the past with the suspense and intrigue of the present as experienced by the author himself.

Sabato has a keen eye for detail. What memory fails to catch, his vivid imagination fills in the picture. This gift enables him to recreate the settings and personalities of the tales in great detail. His accounts of the Yom Kippur War were so accurate that they were recorded and analyzed by army intelligence. According to an Israeli journalist, Yaron London, the descriptions of the streets of Paris were so real, despite the fact that Sabato never visited France. The following quote is from Sabato's acceptance speech for the Nayman Award, June 2009.

ירון לונדון ביקש לראיין אותי. הסכמתי. בא לבקר בישיבה ושוחחנו. ראיתי שהספר נשא חן בעיניו, ואז שאל, מתי היית בפריז? אמרתי לו שמעולם לא ביקרתי בה. אמר לי שהוא היה שם שליח הרדיו והטלוויזיה כשהתחוללו המאורעות שעליהם אני מספר במעשה, וכל פרט שסיפרתי אמת לאמיתה, ואפילו תיאור אבני השפה של המרצפות שהשליכו על השוטרים מדויק הוא.¹¹³

From a young age, Sabato developed a passion for liturgical prose known as *Piyutim*. The Sabato family, steeped in the Sephardic traditions, sang these songs regularly on Sabbath and holidays. These poetic prayers are known for their complex Hebrew style, rich in quotations from Biblical and Rabbinic sources. In his books, Sabato weaves passages of the *Piyutim* into the flow of the narrative. The mixture of story and prose offers a diverse reading experience.

7.3 Publication of the Stories

As stated earlier, the stories Sabato wrote down were kept for private use. They were shared with only the closest of acquaintances and students. One of the students prompted Sabato to publish one of the stories in a monthly

¹¹³ Haim Sabato, "לא כך היה המעשה", *אקדמות* כ"ג

(199-203 ירושלים: התנועה הקיבוצית המאוחדת, אלול תשס"ט, 2009)

magazine "*Amudim*".¹¹⁴ Sabato reluctantly agreed. The response was overwhelming, and the public demanded more. Sabato began to share his stories in other magazines and newspapers for the religious public and the momentum continued.

In 1996, a manuscript of the stories was sent to the Yediot Achronot Press publishing house in Tel Aviv. The sealed manuscript was put away in a drawer. Eventually, the manuscript was put in the hands of Yehudah Meltzer, the editor of Aliyat Hagag Publications, a small publishing house affiliated with the Yediot Achronot Press. Once again, the manuscript remained unopened for months. The editor held no promise for religious authors, especially orthodox rabbis. In Israel at the time, publication of mainstream literature was reserved for secular authors. When the editor finally opened it, and read the first page, he exclaimed, "This time I have found a real author!"

Meltzer invited Sabato to Tel Aviv. At their first meeting, the two men from opposite sides of the ideological spectrum found much in common. A lasting friendship was forged. Sabato discovered that Meltzer's father was the author of one of his favorite poems. In one of the stories, Sabato writes about his first reading of this poem at age seven. Meltzer's father had greatly influenced Sabato's interest in literature.

Yehuda Meltzer contracted Sabato for the publication of his stories. Meltzer succeeded in bringing Sabato's stories to a broad reading audience. The initial success allowed Sabato to share his other writings. Some of his works have seen multiple printings. To this date, four literary works have been published:

1. Emet M'Eretz Titzmach, 1997
2. Tium Kavannot, 1999
3. Ke' Afapay Shachar, 2005
4. Boi Haruach, 2008

¹¹⁴ *Amudim* is a monthly circular published by the Religious Kibbutz Movement in Israel.

1. Emet M'Eretz Titzmach, Hebrew edition: 1997

Yediot Achronot Press, Sifrei Aliyat Hagag, Tel Aviv, Israel

Aleppo Tales, English translated edition: January 2000

The Toby Press, CT, USA

This book is a collection of short stories relating to Sabato's ancestral home and community of Aleppo, in northern Syria.

2. Tium Kavannot, Hebrew edition: 1999

Yediot Achronot Press, Sifrei Aliyat Hagag, Tel Aviv, Israel

Reprinted: 2007

Adjusting Sights, English translated edition: 2006

The Toby Press, CT, USA

This book is a moving account of the experiences of the author as a soldier in the Yom Kippur War.

3. Ke' Afapay Shachar: Hebrew edition: 2005

Yediot Achronot Press, Sifrei Aliyat Hagag, Tel Aviv, Israel

The Dawning of the Day: A Jerusalem Tale, English translated edition:
October, 2006

The Toby Press, CT, USA

This book tells the story of Ezra Siman Tov, a humble and religious man from Jerusalem, coming to terms with a changing world.

4. Boi Haruach: Hebrew edition: 2008

Yediot Achronot Press, Sifrei Aliyat Hagag, Tel Aviv, Israel

The Four Winds, English translated edition, 2010

The Toby Press, CT, USA

This book describes the author's experiences as an "*Oleh Chadash*", a new immigrant to Israel, in the "*Ma'abarot*", transit camps, of the 1950s.

7.4 Literary Distinctions

By some critics, Sabato has been referred to as a modern S.Y. Agnon, the Israeli Noble Prize laureate.¹¹⁵ Sabato's literary works have received the highest awards in the country. In 2000, "*Adjusting Sights*" was awarded the Sapir Award, followed by the Yitzchak Sadeh Award in 2002. In 2009, Sabato was awarded the prestigious Nayman Award for all four of his literary works. Some of his works have sold out before coming to press. One was transformed into a full length film (*Adjusting Sights*). All of his works have been translated into English, French and Russian. The book "*Boi HaRuach*" has been incorporated in the national high-school curriculum for Hebrew literature.

The following is an excerpt from an interview with Rabbi Sabato. This quote summarizes the chronology of Sabato's rise to fame, and his recognition by the Israeli literary experts. The excerpt appeared in the digital literary forum *Milim Milim*, June 2002:

ביום שני ה-8.6.2009, באוניברסיטת בר-אילן, בפתיחת הכנס הבין-אוניברסיטאי הכ"ג לחקר הספרות העברית והיהודית, יוענק לו פרס נוימן היוקרתי לספרות עברית לשנת תשס"ט.

שלא כמו פרס ספיר, של מועצת הפיס (הפרס בעל הערך הכספי הגבוה ביותר), המעורר כל שנה מחלוקת לגבי חשיבותו, שופטיו, ובחירותיו, מדובר כאן בפרס שהוענק לראשונה לש"י עגנון, ומאז קיבלו אותו גדולי הסופרים העבריים: אורי צבי גרינברג, לאה גולדברג, גרשון שופמן, חיים הזז, דב סדן, ש. שלום, משה שמיר, אמיר גלבוע ועוד. השנה, חברי הוועדה (פרופ' אפרים חזן, פרופ' אבידן ליפסקר, פרופ' שמואל רפאל, פרופ' מירי קובובי, ואחרים) בחרו להעניק אותו לסבתו על ספריו

¹¹⁵ See Philip Hollander: "From the Four Winds (Boi HaRuach) Book Review", *Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies*, Volume 30, Number 1 (Purdue, Indiana: University of Purdue, Fall 2011), 151-153.

אמת מארץ תצמח (1997), תיאום כוונות (זוכה פרס ספיר 2000, ופרס יצחק שדה 2002). כעפעפי שחר (2005), ובואי הרוח (2007).

כמו פרס נוימן שעיקרו תוכן, והוא מרוחק מאור הזרקורים (לפחות בשנים האחרונות), ככה גם הזוכה השנה, שלא משתייך לקליקות ספרותיות, לא מתראיין לכתבות ולא מנהל ויכוחים ספרותיים סנסציוניים על דפי העיתונים. הוא מרוחק (פיזית ונפשית) מהמרכז ומהשיח התרבותי. לפני הכל סבתו הוא רב, ממייסדי ישיבת ההסדר "ברכת משה" במעלה אדומים, שם הוא מכהן כר"מ (בארמית "ריש מתיבתא" והכוונה לרב המלמד תלמוד בישיבה). וככה באופן טבעי כתיבתו לאורך השנים בעיקרה תורנית, ורוב כתביו החילוניים נשארו במגירה. אבל אז, אחד מתלמידיו העביר ל"ידיעות ספרים" קובץ סיפורים ששכב שם, עד שיהודה מלצר (עורך ומו"ל "עליית הגג") לקח אותו לידיו, ולאחר קריאת השורות הראשונות התרשם עמוקות, וציין בשולי כתב היד "יופי, יש לי עסק עם סופר". זה מה שהוביל להוצאת "אמת מארץ תצמח", ובעקבותיה לכתבה מתפעלת של ירון לונדון שהגדיר: "עוד מעוז חילוני מתמוטט", והוסיף: "עכשיו צומח דבר ודומני שלא במקרה הוא צומח. בעקבותיו יבואו אחרים ויתחרו בסיפורת העכשווית. הבהולה, עניית הלשון, הנוירוטית".

אבל הפריצה הגדולה לתודעה הציבורית היתה כאמור ב1999, עת התפרסם "תיאום כוונות" (זיכרונותיו כטנקיסט מהתופת של יום הכיפורים). מפתיע ומרגש היה לעקוב אחרי ההתקבלות הנלהבת של הספר שכתוב בלשון כמעט עגנונית, ושבין תיאורי אש וקרבות משובצים קטעי הגות, פיוטים, ומשניות.¹¹⁶

This article describes accurately the man as well as his work. Sabato did not seek the limelight. He often turned down offers for interviews. Despite his unassuming nature, Sabato has succeeded in capturing the attention of every persuasion in Israeli society.

7.5 Literary Style

Sabato applies his mastery of Bible, Talmud, and Jewish Philosophy in every paragraph of his writing. His passion for liturgical prose is evident in all of the works, as he incorporates lengthy quotes into the narrative. Many of the works are autobiographic, fused with tales of his ancestors. The narrative tends to alternate frequently between past and present, often in the

¹¹⁶ Esty Segal, Israeli author and journalist, "Emet Me'Eretz, Interview with Haim Sabato". Internet Blog *Milim Milim* (12.06.2012), Internet source: <http://2nd-ops.com/esty/?p=57373>.

framework of a story within a story. The use of flashback as a literary technique may even be overused in his works. The changing world of the twentieth century provides the backdrop for many of the challenges that the protagonists confront. The stories contain a sense of longing for a time long gone. Consistent with his educational nature, the works deliver powerful, inspiring life lessons.

Sabato's works are suitable to a broad reading audience. The messages are meaningful and relevant. However, without a substantial background in Jewish custom and Talmudic terminology, it may be difficult to appreciate the subtleties and finer details expressed in these works.

Sabato's style could be compared to the genre of detective novellas. The details are never shared in a straightforward manner. Sabato trains the reader to wait patiently and watch as each clue presents itself in the most unpredictable way.

Sabato's religious perspective is reflected in every story. The myriad of occurrences and coincidences that transpire in the stories support the axiom: there is a plan in this world and one must be patient and attentive to witness it unfold. Through the reading of Sabato's works, one becomes aware of the coincidences in his/her own life.

Sabato writes from the heart. He describes his writing experience as Divine inspiration. He never knows in advance when it will appear and where it will take him. When the moment occurs, it takes over his whole being until the work is complete. It is not known at this time if Sabato is writing a new work.

7.6 Additional Publications

In addition to his four literary works, Sabato has written numerous works in Jewish law and philosophy. His writings have appeared in Israeli periodicals, journals, and compendiums of Jewish law. Sabato also authored seven books on religious topics:

1. טל אורות : אוצר מאמרים בנושא שמירת הלשון / העורך הרב חיים סבתו , ירושלים : משפחת גאולה, תשמ"ו, 1986
2. מנחת אהרן : מאסף תורני לזכרו של הרב אהרן שויקה זצ"ל / ערכו יעקב שויקה, חיים סבתו ירושלים : המשפחה, תש"ם, 1980
3. באור פניך - ספר חידושים על התלמוד, תל-אביב : מסורה לעם, תשס"ה 2005.
4. הערות על פירוש המשניות לרמב"ם על מסכת הוריות.
5. אני לדודי - על ימים נוראים. תל-אביב, ידיעות אחרונות : ספרי חמד, 2005
6. אהבת תורה - על פרשות השבוע. תל-אביב, ידיעות אחרונות : ספרי חמד : ספרי עליית הגג, 2000
7. מבקשי פניך – שיחה עם הרב אהרון ליכטנשטיין בעניני אמונה, תל אביב, ידיעות אחרונות : ספרי חמד, תשע"א 2011

7.7 Sabato as Corpus for Fatherhood Research

I have chosen the literary works of Sabato as the corpus of this research. Sabato's works are autobiographic, allowing the study of fathering behavior in the author's family of origin which reflects the traditional observant community. The characters provide an authentic glimpse of the attitudes and behavior of traditional Jewish fathering. Through close reading, this research aims to understand the impact of the tradition on the Jewish male's attitude towards fathering.

Section 8

Emet Me'Eretz Titzmach

8.1 Book Details

Title: אמת מארץ תצמח

Publisher: ידיעות אחרונות, ספרי חמד, ספרי עליית הגג, תל אביב, ישראל

Series: פרוזה : ספרים בעריכת עליזה ציגלר

Copyright: 1997

Length: 212 Pages

Typeset and design: רם-הוצאה לאור בע"מ, הרצליה, ישראל

Printer: יש אופסט, ישראל

ISBN: 965-448-286-X

Paper Size: A5

Jacket: Soft bound

Front Cover: Light blue background. The jacket contains caricature image of the two tablets bearing the Ten Commandments, with additional straight lines placed in disarray. The graphic represents the theme of one of the three novellas entitled, "The Broken Tablets".

Back Cover: The back cover contains a summary of the three short stories, on plain blue background, with additional comments regarding the author's personal connection to the tales, and a brief biography of the author.

English Translation: "Aleppo Tales" (April, 2004) Toby Press, CT. USA

Translated to English by: Philip Simpson

Hardcover English Edition: 250 Pages

ISBN-10: 1592640516

ISBN-13: 978-1592640515

Product Dimensions: 22.1 x 14.7 x 2.7 cm

8.2 Symbolism of the Title

The title “אמת מארץ תצמח” (the truth will sprout from the ground), is also the title of one of the three novellas. The expression is a quote from the Psalms: ¹¹⁷אמת מארץ תצמח וצדק משמים נשקף¹¹⁷. The phrase is indicative of the philosophy contained in all three of the works: The truth is not always visible. Like a seed hidden beneath the ground, the truth makes its’ appearance on its own terms, sometimes in an unpredictable manner. One must be patient to recognize the truth as it slowly emerges.

The additional understanding of the word “ארץ” is an acronym for the words ארם צובה, Aram Tzoba. This is the name of the area in Northern Syria (also known as Halab, Aleppo in English) where Sabato’s ancestors lived for many generations. The title foreshadows the theme in the story bearing the same name, that the truth will be revealed only after the secrets of the ancestors from ארם צובה are understood.

8.3 Brief Synopsis

The ancient Jewish community of Aleppo dates back hundreds of years. The community was the guardian of the famous Keter Aram Tzoba, an ancient Torah scroll, dating back to the ninth century. In this collection of novellas Sabato weaves his family history with the social and political changes that transpired over the past one hundred years.

¹¹⁷ Psalms 85:12

The first story is entitled “גלגל חוזר בעולם”, The Wheel of Fortune Turns in the World). The title comes from a Talmudic discussion:

כי לא יחדל אביון מקרב הארץ¹¹⁸

תניא ר' אלעזר הקפר אומר: לעולם יבקש אדם רחמים על מדה זו (שלא יבוא לידי עניות) שאם הוא לא בא, בא בנו, ואם בנו לא בא, בן בנו בא. שנאמר “כי בגלל הדבר הזה” (דברים טו: י”א)

תנא דבי ר' ישמעאל: גלגל הוא שחוזר בעולם.¹¹⁹

The Talmud sheds light on the Biblical promise that the poor will never cease to exist in this world. Even if one is not currently poor, he should be aware that his position could change at any time. Therefore, teaches the Talmud, one should always be careful to give charity, for one day he may require the same assistance. There is a wheel of fortune that turns in this world. If a person is wealthy, his children or grandchildren may one day find themselves in need. Therefore one should be careful to support the poor, knowing that this kindness will be repaid in the future.

Sabato plays on this theme in numerous ways. The actions of the ancestors continue to reverberate in the lives of the descendants. When assistance is provided in one generation, the payoff occurs in a later one. Philosophical questions of determinism versus destiny are at play in this story. Sabato provides a multigenerational perspective to demonstrate the validity of this concept over time.

In גלגל חוזר בעולם, Sabato shows the influence of the Enlightenment Movement and modernity over the course of five generations. The story pivots around a rare Hanukkah lamp from Halab that makes its way to the Louvre, only to be discovered by a descendant generations later. This story reveals the culture and traditions of an ancient civilization as it grapples with the tides of change.

¹¹⁸ Deuteronomy 15:11

¹¹⁹ Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 151 B

The story begins in the quaint, rural Aleppo, moves to the major metropolitan Paris, with all of its modern ideologies and influences, and ends in Jerusalem, with the return of the descendant to his spiritual roots. Sabato tries to show how the ancestors' righteous behavior had influence on the lives of the future generations.

The second novella, *אמת מארץ תצמח*, is a drama about a rare manuscript that was kept hidden for many generations. Sabato's ancestors were rabbinic scholars in Aleppo for many generations. A dispute arose amongst the communal leaders. Sabato's ancestor was so adamant about his opinion that he abruptly resigned from his position. Subsequently a tragic death occurred in the family. The family felt that the tragedy occurred as a result of the dispute. The elder rabbi believed that the community was wrong in the way they treated him and one day the truth (*אמת*) would surface. He hid away his personal manuscript bearing the support for his opinion. He declared that it could only be revealed after seven generations. Sabato writes about his personal mission to uncover the ancient document. His efforts to locate the obscure manuscript are met with opposition and many failed attempts. Ultimately, Sabato discovers that he is the subject of his own search, he is the seventh generation and through him the curse of the rabbis will be removed. The manuscript is discovered and the truth is revealed.

The third novella, *שברי לוחות*, *The Broken Tablets*, describes the frustration sustained by the elder immigrants as they settled in Israel. Sabato's grandfather was previously the head of the Talmudic Institute in Cairo. He held high esteem in the eyes of the entire community. After the State of Israel was declared, anti-Semitic riots began in many neighboring Moslem countries, forcing the Jews to move. Upon arrival in Israel, the family was placed in a temporary housing project built for new immigrants. In this new environment, the scholarly grandfather was never recognized for his brilliance and expertise, and was relegated to live his last years apart from the rabbinic mainstream.

One day, while praying in a local synagogue, the laymen turned to him and asked a question in Jewish law. While remodeling the tiny synagogue, they decided to replace the decorative reproduction of the tablets bearing the Ten Commandments. How should they respectfully discard the broken ones?

The concept of “The Broken Tablets” is based on a Midrash that discusses the second set of tablets that Moses brought from Mount Sinai. The first tablets were smashed after the incident of the Golden Calf. What was Moses to do with the broken tablets? The Midrash explains that the broken tablets were to remain in the Holy Ark, alongside the new ones.

..אשר שברת ושמתם בארון¹²⁰

תני רב יוסף: מלמד שהלוחות ושברי לוחות מונחין בארון. מכאן לתלמיד חכם ששכח תלמודו מחמת אונסו שאין נוהגין בו מנהג בזיון.¹²¹

This phrase, *שברי לוחות*, has been adopted by the tradition as the inspiration for respecting Talmudic scholars after they grow old and feeble. A scholar who suffers from senility is no longer capable of intense study or rendering of complex Halachic decisions. Yet, due to his previous stature and spiritual level, he is deserving of the highest level of respect. As the broken tablets were preserved in the Holy Ark alongside the second tablets, so too should the retired rabbinic scholar be accorded the greatest respect.

Sabato’s grandfather was like the broken tablets. Prior to his move, all eyes of the Cairo Jewish community looked to him for direction and inspiration. He was an orator par excellence, and his sermons were the highlight of everyone’s week. After his arrival in Israel he lost his status in the new host community and did not regain his position as leader and teacher. Through this story, Sabato attempts to reinstate some of his grandfather’s lost esteem.

¹²⁰ Deuteronomy 10:2

¹²¹ Babylonian Talmud, Menachot 99A

Section 9

Depiction of Fatherhood in Novella 1:

Galgal Chozer Ba'Olam

Sabato introduces the story with a prologue about his maternal grandfather. This personality appears in many of Sabato's stories. Sabato's reverence for his grandfather is evident in every line. The grandfather served as a fatherly figure for Sabato. The personality and behavior of his grandfather were typical of the wise sages of Halab of generations past. He had an ominous presence, was highly focused and disciplined. He never engaged in idle chatter and was constantly absorbed in religious study. Sabato spent many hours attending to his elderly grandfather. He observed his actions carefully and listened attentively to his wisdom and tales of the sages of Halab. This story is based on one of these tales.

9.1 Rabbinic Fathers versus Lay Fathers

This research section focuses on the attitudes and behavior of the traditional father as expressed in the works of Sabato. The majority of the characters portrayed in his works are rabbinic ancestors of the author. The rabbis were versed in every facet of Jewish law and practice. Their every move was calculated through the dictates of the tradition. Therefore, these characters may provide a glimpse into the intended model of fatherhood as implied by the tradition.

In this community the primary focus of the fathers was the continuity of the tradition. Raising children to study and practice the Torah. The other paternal duties were considered subservient to this goal.

It is important to note that not every member of the community was an ordained rabbi. Although strictly observant and highly versed in religious

text, the laymen of Halab may have shared divergent views of fatherhood from their rabbinic counterparts. While the rabbis raised their sons on a pure Torah diet, the laymen encouraged their children to receive a broader, secular education, in addition to their Torah studies. The rabbinic scholars, who have a deeper appreciation of the law, strived to produce offspring dedicated solely to scholarship and service of God. The laymen acknowledged the importance of passing on the tradition to their children, yet encouraged them to learn a trade or profession. This difference can manifest in the styles and emphasis of fathering behavior between the two groups. What is clear in both groups is that the fathers are present in the lives of the children. The stable lifestyle and availability of the fathers enriched the lives of the children greatly.

9.2 Father as Provider and Protector

This story transpires over five generations, starting in the late 1800's and ending in the 1970's. The role of the father as the main provider is consistent in all of the periods discussed in the work. As in most cultures of this period, the fathers were active outside the home in support of the family, while the mothers maintained the home and tended to the children.

The first generation was Raphael Sporte's father. His name is not mentioned in the story. He is mentioned in a flashback regarding Raphael Sporte's Bar Mitzvah celebration.¹²² The narration describes how Raphael was busy preparing his own son, Chiya, for his Bar Mitzvah. Raphael shared with his son the event that inspired him to dedicate his life for Torah study. On the day of his Bar Mitzvah, as he and his father stood by the Torah, an earthquake rocked the country. The ornamental candelabra fell on them. The last thing Raphael remembered was being covered by his father's prayer shawl. Worried for his son's life, his father took a vow. If Raphael would recover, he

¹²² Sabato, Haim. *Emet Me'Eretz Titzmach*. Tel Aviv: Yediot Ahronot, 1997, P. 43

would dedicate him to a life of piety and service of God. The father did everything he could to protect his son from harm.

Raphael Sporte's father was an observant and knowledgeable Jew, like most of the laymen in Halab, yet he was not one of the rabbis. This vow would push Raphael into the inner circles of Talmudic scholarship. It also meant that his son would lead a difficult life, as most of the scholars lived a meager existence. This may seem contrary to the wish of a father for his son. Most fathers would pray that their sons would grow up to earn a reasonable living. As a gesture of thanks to God for saving his son, he dedicated him to a life of spiritual growth.

As expected, Raphael lived a very meager existence. His passion for Torah study and spiritual development kept him apart from worldly affairs. He fulfilled his obligation to marry and have children, yet he was not highly attuned to the family's needs. At times, his wife needed to send him out to earn money to feed their hungry children. Even then, Raphael did not always find work, and wandered back into the house of study. On one such occasion, Raphael sat for hours trying to resolve a complex Talmudic question. Upon resolving the query, he was so overjoyed, his face radiated with an ethereal glow. By chance, a wealthy business man was visiting the house of study and noticed Raphael's saintly aura. The man quietly handed Raphael a coin. He could finally feed his family.

The business man wished to help Raphael on a grander scale. He offered him the chance to sell something of value and live off the proceeds of the sale. Raphael owned a rare antique Menorah,¹²³ and the businessman was able to give a handsome sum to Raphael. He sacrificed an antique heirloom to provide food for his family. Many years later, this random sale would turn out to be the source of inspiration for his troubled great grandson, Raphael Menachem.

¹²³ Used for lighting candles on the holiday of Chanukah.

Raphael Spote was offered rabbinic positions on numerous occasions. He adamantly refused, stating that his involvement in communal matters would distract him from learning. This was not seen favorably in the eyes of the community. Although recognized as a worthy, accomplished scholar, there were members in the community that wished to stop his support. The businessman intervened on his behalf, and Raphael continued to study and be supported by the community.

It should be noted that Raphael was not the norm for the fathers of his community. The Aleppo fathers were diligent in fulfilling their role as providers. His tremendous devotion and love for Torah brought him to behavior beyond the norm. The frustration of those who viewed him as a “man for himself”, is indicative of the men’s position. Fathers were meant to work to support their families and not depend on communal funds.

The third generation in the story was Chiya. From the age of Bar Mitzvah, Chiya also accepted upon himself a life of concentrated Torah study, like his father before him. Chiya had a brilliant mind and a remarkable memory. He grew to become a scholar and an active rabbi in the community. For his services to the community he was provided a monthly stipend. This was his way of providing for his family.

Rabbi Chiya also made efforts to protect his children. When Jacob was in danger of arrest by the authorities, he quickly arranged his departure from the city and sent him to Paris. When the child was at risk, the father moved swiftly to steer him clear of the danger. This was a difficult and painful move for Chiya, as he felt very close to his beloved Jacob.

Jacob Spote was the fourth generation. He was the younger son of Chiya. Jacob excelled in his studies until he exhausted all of the teachers in the Talmud Torah. Jacob transferred to the more liberal and modern school, Kol Yisrael Chaverim. Jacob was the first member of the rabbinic family to receive a secular education. His academic prowess awarded him the opportunity to

study in Paris on full scholarship. Jacob went on to become a teacher, and upon return to Halab, was appointed the headmaster of Kol Yisrael Chaverim. This path made it easier for Jacob to provide support for his family. He was able to strike a balance between the spiritual life of scholarship and the involvement in worldly affairs. As sole bread winner in his family, Jacob fulfilled his duty as provider to the fullest.

9.3 Teaching Torah

The theme of Torah study and the transmission of the love and knowledge of the Torah is central to the entire work. The characters spend much time and energy learning with their children, and praying that their children will continue the Jewish mission of scholarship.

Raphael's father may or may not have been a scholar himself. Most likely he was observant like most of the men in the community. The manner and care in which he prepared Raphael for his Bar Mitzvah shows a high level of commitment. His choice of celebrating the occasion at the crack of dawn is an example of his dedication. When the earthquake struck, destroying the synagogue and wounding the boy, the father looks to God for assistance. He could have promised many other things when he took the vow: To give charity, communal service, to take upon himself the recitation of extra prayers. Yet, the father chose to dedicate his son to a life of Torah study. This promise revealed what was most dear to his heart. The young Raphael was brought to the head sage of the community and was trained for a life of intense study and asceticism. The son Raphael achieved a level of study unmatched in the entire community. The father was successful in fulfilling his obligation of encouraging the son to study Torah.¹²⁴

¹²⁴ The tradition commands the father to teach his son. If he is unable, the father is allowed to hire a teacher for the boy. Each of these methods dispel the obligation to teach Torah to the child. See Rambam, Yad HaChazaka, Laws of Talmud Torah, Chapter 1.

Raphael Sparte was very concerned about the Torah education his son Chiya received. He did not approve of the method employed by the local religious school. He chose to home school the boy himself. He taught him according to the tradition set down in the Ethics of the Fathers: From age five until ten mastery of the Bible, age ten to fifteen Mishnah, and from age fifteen Talmud.

הוא היה אומר: בן חמש למקרא, בן עשר למשנה, בן שלוש עשרה למצוות, בן חמש עשרה לגמרא.¹²⁵

As Chiya came close to the age of Bar Mitzvah, his mother blessed him. With tears in her eyes, she begged her son to remain loyal to the tradition. Since the family was poor, she was saddened that she could not give him a proper gift. Instead she handed him a scarf that she embroidered the first letters of the verse from the Proverbs:

שמע בני מוסר אביך ואל תטוש תורת אמך.¹²⁶

Listen my son to the chastising of the father, and do not abandon the Torah of your mother. [EL]

This verse was a prayer that the young boy would continue to heed the wishes of the parents. Raphael blessed Chiya for a life of Torah study and practice of the rituals. He relayed a story about a student who planned to leave his Rabbi after many years of study. As he said goodbye, the rabbi held his student's arm and recited a verse. It is important to cling to the commandments both in youth and in old age. When he finished his blessing, the rabbi squeezed his arm tight. He warned him that God will hold him accountable for his actions during every period of life. The student later attested that whenever temptation arose, he was reminded of the strong grip his rabbi placed on his arm, and he withdrew from sin.

While sharing the tale to his son, Raphael held Chiya's arm and squeezed it in the same manner. This father and son talk was significant and would have a

¹²⁵ Pirkei Avot 5:21

¹²⁶ Proverbs 1:8

lasting effect on the boy. At that moment Chiya made the decision to dedicate his life to Torah study.

In the next section, the narrative switches to the author's visit to his grandfather prior to his own Bar Mitzvah. His mother sent him to ask the grandfather to write his Bar Mitzvah sermon. His grandfather shared with him the story of Raphael Sparte, and how he blessed his son Chiya prior to his Bar Mitzvah. Sabato's grandfather held the young Sabato's arm in the same manner. The tight grip that influenced the young Chiya, influenced Sabato as well. At that moment, he accepted in his heart a sincere love of the Torah.

Raphael Sparte went on to teach his son ancient secrets about the Tefillin¹²⁷ worn by men from the age of Bar Mitzvah. Sabato's grandfather chose not to divulge the secrets to Sabato. However, he relayed many of the other ideas that Raphael taught Chiya. These same Torah ideas were incorporated in the speech that Sabato would deliver at his Bar Mitzvah celebration.

Raphael went to great lengths to give his son a strong foundation in Torah knowledge. He invested hours each day training him in the discipline of Talmudic discourse. He was successful in transmitting the love and dedication for a Torah life. In this role of the father, Raphael dutifully fulfilled his obligation of teaching Torah. Chiya, like his father before him, would remain loyal to the Torah cause and become a leading scholar in the community.

Chiya raised his children with a similar passion. Although most of his waking hours were spent in the house of study, he found time to interact with his children and teach them. He was very fond of his youngest son Jacob. Jacob was granted special privileges, and Chiya would drop everything he was doing to interact with him. He held much promise for the boy as he displayed

¹²⁷ Phylacteries, leather boxes strapped daily to the arm and the head, bearing verses pertaining to the Oneness of God, and the mission of the Jewish people.

great learning potential. As he answered Jacob's many questions, Chiya strived to instill the love of Torah in his son's heart.

...ומאהב עליו את התורה ואת דברי החכמים.¹²⁸

Jacob Sparte represents the generation of self-activation. In the previous generations, children were highly obedient in regards to their father's demands. Sons often followed in their father's footsteps, and father's only had to lead by example. This was true regarding a choice of trade as well as deep rooted practices and traditions. Chiya, like his father Raphael, was an extremely accomplished scholar, and served as a strong link in the continuity of the tradition. He would soon be confronted with the challenges of parenting in this new era.

At first, Chiya was reluctant to expose Jacob to secular studies. He understood his responsibilities as a father and was keen to train his son in the discipline of Talmud, as his father did for him. Jacob's brilliance proved too much for the teachers at the local religious school. When Jacob requested to be enrolled in the new modern school, Kol Yisrael Chaverim, Chiya was faced with a difficult decision. His wish was for his son to continue the course set down by his father. The new school was certainly not a step in that direction. Chiya conceded, knowing his son's heart and desire for knowledge. He would monitor Jacob's progress in Torah studies closely. Each day he would say a short prayer that God would help Jacob maintain his love of Torah and fear of God.¹²⁹

For three generations, the fathers in the story held major influence on their son's lives. When Raphael's father vowed that his son would become a scholar, he became a scholar. No questions were asked. From Chiya's generation a new atmosphere arose. Religious ideals were confronted with modern philosophies. The patriarchal structure of society was challenged. As

¹²⁸ Sabato, Emet Me'Eretz, P. 55

¹²⁹ Sabato, Emet Me'Eretz, P. 67

the new ideologies were embraced by the children, traditional commitment and obedience to the father began to deteriorate.

Being a rabbinic leader in his community, Chiya's handling of this tension will be valuable for this research. How would Chiya respond to Jacob's interest in these new attitudes and beliefs? What strains would this place on the relationship between father and son? Sabato seems to be grappling with these questions throughout the story's progression.

Chiya was careful not to react, and encouraged Jacob in a very subtle fashion. His relationship with Jacob remained strong and positive, and throughout his life Jacob remained dedicated and loyal to the Torah. Chiya employed tremendous wisdom, navigating between his wishes and his son's needs and desires. His ability to tighten and loosen the grip on his son is noteworthy. Jacob studied Torah seriously throughout his life, encouraging and teaching others along the way. Chiya was successful in fulfilling this aspect of Jewish fathering.¹³⁰

Jacob raised his son Victor in a similar path that his father raised him. Initially Jacob enrolled Victor in the religious school. At the time, Jacob served as the headmaster of Kol Yisrael Chaverim. He and his wife Rochelle chose to start the boy on a course of pure Torah studies, with the expectation to introduce secular knowledge at a later stage.¹³¹

Jacob tried to introduce Victor to the methods of inquiry. Victor studied with his father regularly, but he was not interested in a life of learning. After many attempts, Jacob stepped back so as not to pressure the boy. Victor maintained

¹³⁰ The question can be raised, is the fulfillment of this command to teach Torah to the children gaged by the effort or by the results? If a father spent endless hours attempting to teach his son, and in the end the son rejects everything, did the father fulfill his obligation? The halacha establishes clear standards of fulfillment of this obligation: A father who taught his son to read the five books of the Torah, and to explain the verses, has dispelled his minimal obligation. Teaching the son additional religious subjects is considered extra, and is rewarded accordingly. Based on Sefer HaChinuch, Mitzvah 419.

¹³¹ Sabato, Emet Me'Eretz, P. 101

a basic regimen of religious study and observance of the rituals. However, he found greater satisfaction in business and forged a new course of life.

This shows clearly how Jacob tried to fulfill his responsibility to train his son in the study of Torah. Jacob invested much time to develop Victor's skills and knowledge. The effort was great, but the results were not satisfying. This is part of the challenge that lies before every father. The father may want to teach and inspire the child, yet not every child is susceptible to the message. Although Jacob was a brilliant person and master teacher, his own son did not show the desire for a life of scholarship.

Sabato is trying to portray the shift that transpired over the course of the generations. The previous generations were willing to sacrifice everything for Torah study. They lived a meager existence and exerted themselves way beyond their physical capacity. As portrayed in the story, Raphael, Chiya, and Jacob were accomplished scholars, revered by the entire community. During these generations the fathers succeeded in performing their religious obligation to teach their children.

As the community sustained change from without, as foreign ideals and influence were introduced, a shift in priorities occurred. This shift is a central theme in the story. Jacob, who may have been as brilliant as his ancestors, faced many challenges in inspiring his son to continue the tradition with a similar passion.

The changes in society play an important part in Sabato's works. The stories portray the past with pangs of nostalgia. As the small community of Halab is hit by Western influence, the role of the father is weakened, and at the same time, the continuity of the tradition is at risk. On the one hand, Sabato's works provide a glimpse into a lost world, and that in itself is valuable. On the other hand, they provide the background to understand the massive changes that took place in the Jewish community over the past century, giving insight to our current state of affairs.

Jacob's youngest son, Raphael Menachem, turned three on the holiday of Shavuot. At this age Jacob wished to introduce him to the world of Torah. He chose to do this in a very unique way. At the crack of dawn, Jacob took Raphael to meet the grandfather Chiya on his way to the synagogue. Chiya held the boy's hand while he sang the preliminary blessings aloud. This experience left an indelible imprint on his memory, with the sounds of the Halab *Nusach*¹³² penetrating to his soul. Although this would be the last time that he would see his grandfather, the seeds of the tradition were planted deep. The significant presence of the father figure would eventually bear fruit as the grandchild grew older.

9.4 Interaction between Father and Son

The term interaction is very broad. Every conversation between a father and son is a form of interaction. It would be impossible to analyze each one. However there are certain modes of communication that are relevant for this research. Education and training play a big part in the father-son relationship.

In the tradition's view, the father was responsible for preparing the child for life. In earlier generations, there was little time for recreation. Children were encouraged to assist in the maintenance of the home, the fields, and tending to the animals. Fathers trained the sons in many of the heavy tasks needed for survival. Typically, fathers needed to be strict with their sons to ensure that they learned properly.

The fathers were largely responsible for the continuity of the tradition. To guarantee success, the tradition recommends for the father to apply wisdom in his educational approach. Too much pressure may be discouraging. The soft approach may lead to minimal results. In this novella, Sabato describes the need for balance.

¹³² Nusach refers to the local communal prayer structure, wording, and melody. The Halab nusach still exists today, despite the fact that Jews no longer live in Syria.

With his other children, Jacob succeeded in striking a balance between the soft father and the tough one. He invested many hours studying with them. His elder son Victor displayed little interest in learning. After many attempts, Jacob realized it was smarter to ease up and not cause further frustration. His daughter Sophie gave him a different challenge, as she was exceptionally bright and thirsty to learn. Her quest spilled over into areas of study that were traditionally set apart for men only. With these two children Jacob maintained a balance of love and discipline. He tried to guide them, yet was also sensitive to their inner wishes and needs.

Sabato refers to this balance by quoting a famous adage from the Sages,

“שמאל דוחה וימין מקרבת”, or, the left hand pushes away while the right hand brings close. [EL] ¹³³

The original expression is found in the Talmud:

תנו רבנן: לעולם תהא שמאל דוחה וימין מקרבת, לא כאלישע שדחפו לגחזי בשתי ידיו, ולא כיהושע בן פרחיה שדחפו לאחד מתלמידיו בשתי ידיו.... תניא רבי שמעון בן אלעזר אומר יצר, תינוק, ואשה תהא שמאל דוחה וימין מקרבת.¹³⁴

The Talmud refers to two incidents where the teacher was too strict on the errant student, pushing him away with two hands, and not leaving him an opening for repentance. The first was Elisha the prophet, in the Book of Kings, and the second was Yehoshua Ben Prachia from the early Mishnaic period. The tough approach of these teachers had serious repercussions, proving the ineffectiveness of their method. The Talmud proposes that the teacher, as well as the parent, needs to strike a balance between the soft and firm approach, so as not to discourage the child and turn him away. The right hand should be used to bring the child close. Symbolically, the right hand is considered the stronger hand. When the love for the child stems from the stronger right hand, when the child knows that the parent really cares about them, then he

¹³³ Source to follow

¹³⁴ Babylonian Talmud, Sotah 47A

will submit to discipline. Punishment, if required, should always be meted out by the weaker left hand. This advice is useful for teachers and parents alike.

After eighteen years of waiting, Jacob was overjoyed to have another son. He treated him like a prince, granting him privileges that the other children never enjoyed. He gave Raphael Menachem so much attention that his associates could not find time to speak with him. People tried hinting to Jacob that he was spoiling the lad, but he did not listen. Sabato foreshadows the outcome of Jacob's approach, using this Talmudic adage. Jacob knew this technique and applied it with his students. Somehow, with Raphael, he ignored it.

...יודע היה ז'ק פרק במצוות חינוך, וכשלימד את תלמידיו היה זהיר שתהא שמאל
דוחה וימין מקרבת. אבל בבנו נהג כאילו שתי ידיו ימניות הן.¹³⁵

Raphael was inquisitive and quick to advance in his studies. Jacob wished for his son to build a strong foundation of Torah knowledge before exposing him to secular wisdom and ideals. However, Raphael absorbed readily everything he could lay his hands on. The religious school could not meet his intellectual needs. Raphael was transferred to Kol Yisrael Chaverim. As headmaster, Jacob hoped he could monitor his son's progress closely.

Raphael excelled in the new school. He was articulate and charismatic. Wherever he went people gathered around to listen. When Raphael befriended one of the radical teachers, he was exposed to the emerging socialist philosophy. Raphael became estranged from his father. Due to his love and admiration for Raphael, Jacob remained silent.

As Raphael distanced himself from the rituals and beliefs, the community at large took notice. He no longer participated in communal prayers, and rumors began that he was desecrating the Sabbath. Sabato enlists another expression from the Midrash to explain the inability of Jacob to notice the trend.

¹³⁵ Sabato, Emet Me'Eretz, P. 110

שכל הקהילה ידעה על מה שאירע עם מקס, חוץ מאביו ואמו, **שהאהבה מקלקלת את השורה**.¹³⁶

The Midrash discusses Abraham's unusual behavior prior to the binding of Isaac. Abraham was wealthy like a king, with many servants at his service. Yet, upon being commanded to sacrifice his son Isaac, Abraham broke protocol, and saddled his own donkey for the journey. The Rabbis found this behavior peculiar for a man of his stature. They explain his behavior with the expression, "אהבה מקלקלת את השורה", or, "Love destroys the line".¹³⁷ Abraham's endless love for God blinded him, causing him to behave in ways unsuited for his prominent stature.

Sabato's use of this expression is ironic. Abraham was driven to fulfill God's command, even if it meant sacrificing his only son. His abounding love for God made him cross over social norms. Abraham is praised for this level of service. On the other hand, this same expression is used by Sabato to describe the love of Jacob for his son Raphael. His permissive approach was the ultimate cause of Raphael's rejecting the tradition.

Sabato sends fathers a warning: Don't be naïve. Don't allow the love for the child to whitewash everything he does. Maintain a balance. This is an important lesson for any parent.

Sabato alludes to the right hand-left hand balance in a previous section. Jacob's father, Chiya, understood the need for balance in educating the children. His love for Jacob did not blind him. He chose to use the soft right hand approach sparingly. Sabato hints at this Talmudic wisdom when describing Chiya's paternal dilemma.

אמר לעצמו: מוטב שלא אומר, **ואקרבונו בימין**, וסוף שאהבתו אלי ואהבתו לתורה תשיבנו לתלמודו. זכותו של אבא תעמוד לנו, ויקוים בנו מה שאמרו חכמים במי

¹³⁶ Sabato, Emet Me'Eretz, P.122

¹³⁷ Based on Midrash Breishit Rabbah, Chapter 55. Cited by Rashi to Genesis 22:3

ויחבש (אברהם) את-חמורו - אהבה מקלקלת את השורה. כמה עבדים וכמה שפחות היו לו לאותו צדיק, והוא בעצמו חבש את חמורו, ללמדך זריזותו.

שהוא תלמיד חכם ובנו תלמיד חכם ובן בנו תלמיד חכם, שמכאן ואילך תורה
מחזרת על אכסניה שלה שנאמר: לא ימושו מפיד ומפי זרעך ומפי זרע זרעך עד עולם,
ולא ידח ממנו נדח.¹³⁸

In this incident, when trying to steer his son clear of foreign ideologies, Chiya chose the path of the softer right hand, allowing Jacob the independence to choose for himself. At this junction, the strict left hand approach may have been more damaging. Chiya remained silent. This wisdom proved worthy. The father and son were able to maintain open lines of communication and mutual respect.

As a child develops, it is impossible to pinpoint one factor as to the cause of his direction in life. The characters portrayed were living in turbulent times. New ideologies were attracting followers from every country and culture. The authoritative paternal influence was losing its hold on the new generation. Regardless of his father's approach, the new trends in society coupled with Raphael's brilliance and his keen sense of social justice may have been weighty factors in his development. The narrator's suggestion that Jacob's permissive parenting was the cause for Raphael's life choices may be simplistic.

9.5 Arranging a Marriage

Jacob excelled in both Torah studies and in academic subjects. He initiated the plan to move to Paris to pursue higher education. He did not wait for his father's permission. Yet, when it came time to marry, his father Chiya approached Jacob and informed him that it was time for him to marry. He insisted that it was his responsibility to secure for him an appropriate life-mate.¹³⁹ The tradition recommends that men should marry between the age of eighteen and twenty. It was common for the father to facilitate the match.

¹³⁸ Sabato, Emet Me'Eretz, P. 66, based on Babylonian Talmud, Bava Metzia 85 A

¹³⁹ Sabato, Emet Me'Eretz, P. 69

The paternal involvement in the marital arrangement was typical in the previous generations. However, Jacob was different. With his exposure and worldliness, it seems strange that he would allow his father to arrange his marriage. This demonstrates the strong relationship that existed between them, and the reverence Jacob held for his father.

Chiya was successful in fulfilling his obligation to help his son marry.¹⁴⁰ A generation later, when the time came for Jacob and Rochelle to marry off their son Victor, they wished to find him a suitable match from the girls of Halab. They knew the local families well, and they knew that the girls of their sect were proper and fitting. Jacob made the effort to assist his son. Victor, on the other hand, felt the need to seek a bride of his choice, and not to be part of an arranged marriage. This was a sign of changing times. The parents were slowly losing control over this area of their children's lives.¹⁴¹

One point is clear: the fathers were present and actively involved in every phase of their children's lives. The fact that the children grew to become well-adjusted and productive members of society can be attributed partly to the father's availability.

9.6 Passing on Traditions: Tunes of בית אבא

As the Jews of Halab hit difficult times, many were forced to relocate to support their families. Some travelled across the ocean, some went down to Egypt, and others moved to Palestine. Wherever the families went, they gathered together in small communities in order to remain close. A Jew from Halab always felt at home when he prayed in the melodies he learned from his father.

¹⁴⁰ The question remains, as the next generation evolves, how will Jacob approach this matter with his own children? Once he breaks from the traditional lifestyle, will he be so adamant to marry his own children off at such a young age? Will his children respond to him in the same fashion that he did with his father?

¹⁴¹ Sabato, Emet Me'Eretz, P. 101

The term father is used here figuratively. The term refers to something ancient, original, authoritative. It does not refer to any particular father, rather to the elders of the sect.

This expression is indicative of the strong cultural practices engrained in the people of Halab. The elders of this ancient sect established a unique mode of prayer that would last for many generations, and can still be heard in Halaby synagogues around the world. The Jews of Halab were very proud of their nusach. The fathers of Halab were very successful in transmitting both the nuances of the nusach, as well as the sense of pride that they felt for their unique melodies. The power of this tradition is expressed in the climax of the story, when the estranged Raphael Menachem hears the familiar melodies from his childhood and is drawn back into the fold.

The use of the term בית אבא provides an additional insight. For someone that has strayed from the community, there is nothing more comforting and more grounding than to be reconnected with the sights and sounds of the home of origin. Although the nusach was created many generations before, the father is acknowledged for successfully transmitting this rich part of the tradition to the children.

It is interesting to note the use of the term mother in expressions like “mother tongue”, or “motherly love”. These expressions have universal meaning. Through the mother, the young baby learns to speak his first language. Any new language acquired later in life will always be considered an add-on to the first language, the mother tongue. Motherly love refers to the unique bond between mother and infant. Both of these expressions deal with the dynamic between the mother and her infant. The term ניוונים של בית אבא, the tunes of the father’s house, describe the connection of the father to a later stage of development. As the child grows, the father was expected to train him in the

¹⁴² Sabato, Emet Me’Eretz, P. 71

ways of the tradition. The father's nusach was the one that took precedence and was to be passed on from father to son. It is clear that the father needs to be available and involved for the child to be a receiver of this tradition.

9.7 Father as Role Model

Sabato often sets the tone in his stories with a detailed description of the wise sages of Halab. The wise men of Halab were meticulous in their religious practices. Their behavior was highly consistent: Communal prayers three times daily, designated times for study, weekly Sabbath observance, and strict adherence to the many customs and traditions of the observant lifestyle. Time was never wasted and words were always weighed carefully.

The father holds a tremendous influence on the children. Not everything the child learns is from direct instruction. The child observes the way the father interacts with others, how he performs household tasks, how he deals with business, how he prays, etc. Many of the father's subtle mannerisms will leave a lasting imprint on the child's psyche. Even the image of the father's face will be used as a reminder of the correct and proper behavior for the child.

Jacob Sporte's move to Paris presented him with many challenges. His new surroundings and the people he associated with were very different from those he grew up with. He was forced to clarify for himself his own set of values and priorities. In the midst of his inner search he has a vision of his father.

עלתה לפניו דמות דיוקנו של אביו, חכם חייא, כשהוא לומד עמו משנה, ונמלא
געגועים לביתו.¹⁴³

This inner experience was a significant one for Jacob. This fleeting image of his father caused Jacob to reset his goals and make important decisions for his future.

¹⁴³ Sabato, Emet Me'Eretz, P. 76

In this quote, Sabato paraphrases a source in the Midrash pertaining to Joseph and his father Jacob. The following are the verses that the Midrash expounds on.

וַיְהִי כַּדְבָרָה אֶל יוֹסֵף יוֹם יוֹם וְלֹא שָׁמַע אֵלֶיהָ לְשָׂכַב אֶצְלָהּ לְהִיּוֹת עִמָּה: וַיְהִי כִּהְיוֹם
הַזֶּה וַיָּבֵא הַבַּיְתָה לַעֲשׂוֹת מְלֹאכְתּוֹ וְאִין אִישׁ מֵאֲנָשֵׁי הַבַּיִת שָׁם בְּבַיִת: וַתִּתְפָּשֶׂהוּ בְּבִגְדוֹ
לֵאמֹר שְׂכָבָה עִמִּי וַיַּעֲזֹב בְּגָדוֹ בְּיָדָהּ וַיֵּנֶס וַיֵּצֵא הַחוּצָה: וַיְהִי כִּרְאוּתָהּ כִּי עָזַב בְּגָדוֹ בְּיָדָהּ
וַיֵּנֶס הַחוּצָה....¹⁴⁴

Joseph was sold as a slave to Egypt by his brothers. He was bought by a nobleman known as Potiphar. Joseph was a diligent and worthy servant and was soon appointed head of Potiphar's household. Potiphar's wife set eyes on him and waited for the opportunity when the two would be alone. She made many advances to him, yet he refused. At one point, in a fit of desperation, she grabbed Joseph, demanding he satisfy her desire. Joseph resisted temptation, left his cloak in her hands, and ran outside. The wife accused Joseph of trying to accost her and he was imprisoned.

The Midrash describes what Joseph may have experienced in those difficult moments. The image of the father plays an important role in this episode.

וַתִּתְפָּשֶׂהוּ בְּבִגְדוֹ לֵאמֹר - בְּאוֹתָהּ שֶׁהָ בָּאָה דְיוֹקְנֵהוּ שֶׁל אָבִיו וְנִרְאָתָהּ לוֹ בַּחֲלוֹן, אָמַר
לוֹ: יוֹסֵף, עֵתִידִין אַחִיךָ, שִׁיכְתְּבוּ עַל אֲבִי אֲפֹד וְאֵתָהּ בִּינֵיהֶם, רְצוֹנְךָ שִׁימַחָה שְׁמֵךְ
מִבִּינֵיהֶם וְתִקְרָא רוּעָה זִוּנוֹת?¹⁴⁵

The Midrash is trying to answer the following question: How did Joseph withstand the test of Potiphar's wife's many attempts to seduce him? The Midrash suggests that Joseph envisioned the image of his father Jacob. The image of his father's face was the impetus to prevent him from sin. Jacob was a virtuous man. Joseph was his closest son, who spent many hours serving his father and learning from him.¹⁴⁶ From childhood, the image of Jacob was

¹⁴⁴ Genesis 39:10-13

¹⁴⁵ Babylonian Talmud, Sotah 36 B

¹⁴⁶ Rashi to Genesis 45:27

את כל דברי יוסף: סימן מסר להם במה היה עוסק כשפירש ממנו, בפרשת עגלה ערופה, זהו שאמר וירא את העגלות אשר שלח יוסף ולא אמר אשר שלח פרעה.

etched deeply on Joseph's psyche, and this remained for him as an eternal source of inspiration, even at the most challenging moments.

Sabato alludes to this Midrash by choosing the exact same wording when discussing Jacob Sporte's life in Paris. Jacob and Rochelle needed to escape from Halab to avoid arrest. In the beginning, Jacob's life in Paris was very difficult. He was completely alone and the assistance that was promised did not materialize. In a moment of despair, Jacob entered a synagogue to join the afternoon prayers. Even there he did not find solace. The people prayed too quickly and the melodies were not familiar. When the men sat down for a brief study session, Jacob saw that they could hardly pronounce the Hebrew text properly, and their rendering of the text was incorrect. At this point, Jacob envisioned דמות דיקנו של אביו,¹⁴⁷ he saw the image of his father Chiya. Chiya was sitting with him as a young boy and teaching him Mishnah. At that moment, Jacob was overcome with longing for home.

This allusion by Sabato is significant. The Midrash describes the tremendous influence that the father holds over the child. His aura remains close to the son's heart long after the son has left the home. The words of the father may or may not remain in the child's memory. However, his image is etched deeply in his subconscious. If the father was a good man with upstanding values, the image of the father will remain a source of positive influence for the rest of his life.

Although Jacob Sporte will go through many ideological changes, this paternal image will guide him throughout his life. As Jacob settles into his new life in Paris, and the lines between Halab and Paris begin to fade, Sabato reiterates the theme of the fatherly image. This time the image becomes distorted, as the father is now sitting in Paris. Sabato seems to be emphasizing

Rashi explains that Joseph studied regularly with his father Jacob prior to his disappearance. When the opportunity arose for him to inform Jacob of his existence, Joseph sent his father wagons as a hint regarding the topic of their last discussion.

¹⁴⁷ Sabato, Emet Me'Eretz, P. 76

the shift that was occurring inside Jacob. His own identity was being forged. Jacob was playing off the image of the father and the traditions of his past, to clarify for himself where he stood and where he belonged.

דמיונו הוליד אותו מתמונות חלב עירו לתמונות פריז, והיו התמונות מתערבבות.
ראה את אביו יושב ומעיין במשניות בביתו אשר בפריז, והחזן, חכם אלפייה, מסלסל
בקולו בבית הכנסת ברחוב פאוה.¹⁴⁸

כך היה ז'ק מהלך ברחובות פריז כמרפרף, נוגע ואינו נוגע.¹⁴⁹

Jacob is trying to clarify his identity. As he moves farther from his home and its traditions, he is overcome with a sense of floating above the ground. In the presence of the father, a son feels protected, confident, grounded. When disconnected, the son may find it challenging to plant new roots.

In the final section of the story, Sabato uses this theme for a third time. Max (formerly Raphael Menachem) is requested to read aloud the philosophy of Maimonides to his blind teacher. During the discussion he has a flashback to a time when he was a young boy, sitting at his father's Sabbath table. His father is teaching him the same chapter of Maimonides. He cannot recall the words, but he remembers his father's radiant face. Max goes through entire upheaval, questioning the new philosophies that he embraced.

“דמות דיוקנו של אביו נראית לו יותר ויותר”
before him more and more. [EL]¹⁵⁰

Once again Sabato chooses this Midrash as the impetus for change. For Max, his father Jacob was the image of devotion and dedication to the Jewish people, to the Torah, and to God. For many years Max tried to hide from his roots, suppressing any thoughts about his family, his home, his town, and his upbringing. He had channeled all of his talents and energies to the cause of

¹⁴⁸ Sabato, Emet Me'Eretz, P. 78

¹⁴⁹ Sabato, Emet Me'Eretz, P. 79

¹⁵⁰ Sabato, Emet Me'Eretz, P. 135

social equality. When the social revolution was over, suddenly Max found the time to reflect on his life. The fatherly image was the entry point to his past.

Max became agitated. To calm his nerves, he decides to take a stroll to the Louvre Museum. At the Louvre he discovers an exhibit of rare Judaica artifacts. On display is an unusual Chanukah Menorah from the Jews of Halab. The name engraved on the base of the Menorah is Sporte. The Menorah was once owned by Raphael Sporte, the grandfather for whom he was named after. Max, Raphael Menachem Sporte, is now determined to reconnect with his Jewish roots.

Max joins a group of students to tour the Holy Land. On his way to see the Western Wall, he meets an elderly man on his way to morning prayers. The man begins to recite the morning blessings in the traditional Halab nusach. This was the same nusach that Max heard when he escorted his grandfather to the synagogue for the first time. The memories buried in his subconscious surfaced. Max envisioned his grandfather Chiya walking him in Jerusalem. The circle was complete.

The many difficult questions that Max carried in his heart about religion and belief evaporated. As he listened to the sweet melody of the prayers, he knew that he was home. The Menorah of Raphael, the nusach of Chiya, and the image of his father had all brought him back. He was no longer a fragment, floating aimlessly. He was a son. He belonged. His link in the long chain of the tradition was restored.

Inherent in this section regarding the father as role model, is the imprinting of the father on the psyche of the child. This process takes place when the father is present and available in abundance in the child's development. The greater the moral and ethical level the father achieves in his life, the deeper the positive impact he will have on his child. The characters portrayed were exposed to very special role models, which enhanced their lives greatly.

9.8 Circumcision

Jacob and Rochelle raised two children in the distant Paris. Giving birth so far away from their own parents was difficult. The children were named in the Halab tradition, the son was named after the grandfather Chiya, and the daughter, Sophie, after the grandmother Shafiya. Sabato describes the preparations for the circumcision on the eight day.

In the evening prior to the ceremony, it is customary to perform the “Zohar” ceremony. The community gathers in the new baby’s home and recites special prayers. Each of the guests is honored with a recitation. The baby is passed around and receives special blessings. Candles are lit, special traditional delicacies are served, charity is collected, and liturgical songs are sung.

The description of the Zohar celebration from the ancient Halab community is lengthy and detailed. Sabato is trying to show the contrast between Halab and Paris.¹⁵¹ Jacob and Rochelle planned the Zohar celebration for their first son, only to discover that the local Jews in Paris never heard of such a ceremony. The few members of the congregation that arrived did not know the prayers. There were no women to prepare the traditional cakes. Jacob had to recite the prayers and blessings himself. When it came time to light the candles, the guests had already left. As a father, Jacob fulfilled the tradition as he knew it. The lackluster ceremony caused a greater longing for their parents and their ancestral homeland.

Jacob and Rochelle eventually move back to Halab. After many years of infertility, a second son is born. This time the circumcision ceremony would be celebrated in full Halab style. The Zohar ritual was performed with all the trimmings, and the circumcision was conducted in the presence of all of the rabbinic leaders of the town. The elder sage of the town blessed the baby Raphael Menachem that he should grow up to be a Talmudic scholar like his namesake, Rabbi Raphael. From the audience rose a voice that the boy should

¹⁵¹ Sabato, *Emet Me’Eretz*, Pp. 86–87

grow to be an academic scholar like his father Jacob. Chiya arose to counter the blessing. He blessed the boy again to become a God fearing Jew and a Talmudic scholar like the ancestor Rabbi Raphael.

This aspect of the story speaks to the heart of Jewish fatherhood. At the first opportunity, the Jewish father enters his son into the covenant of Abraham, praying that his child will grow up to study Torah, marry according to the tradition, and live a life filled with good deeds. The Jewish father stands at the circumcision of his son and prays for the boy's role in Jewish continuity.

9.9 Procreation and Family Size

The tradition commands the father to produce at least two children, one boy and one girl. This obligation is learned out from the Book of Genesis:

ויברך אותם, אלוקים, ויאמר להם אלוקים פרו ורבו ומלאו את-הארץ, וכבשוה; ורדו בדגת הים, ובעוף השמיים, ובכל-חיה, הרומשת על-הארץ.¹⁵²

ויברך אלקים את נח ואת בניו, ויאמר להם פרו ורבו ומלאו את הארץ.¹⁵³

The obligation to produce children is the first command given to Adam and Eve, and repeated once again in the time of Noah after the deluge. Although the minimum obligation is two, the tradition encourages having more children. Maimonides elucidates this point:

שאע"פ שקיים אדם פריה ורביה בבן ובת, הרי הוא מצווה מדברי סופרים שלא יבטל מלפרות ולרבות כל זמן שיש בו כח, שכל המוסיף נפש אחת מישראל כאילו בנה עולם.¹⁵⁴

One of the sources Maimonides based this idea on is a verse in Ecclesiastes:

בבוקר זרע את זרעך ולערב אל תנח ירך, כי אינך יודע אי זה יכשר, הזה או זה, ואם שניהם כאחד טובים.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵² Genesis 1:28

¹⁵³ Genesis 9:1

¹⁵⁴ Rambam, Yad HaChazakah, Hilchot Ishut 15:16

In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand:
for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether
they both *shall be* alike good.¹⁵⁶

Even though one has produced the proscribed amount of offspring, the verse suggests that one should not hesitate to continue to sow his seeds in the “evening” of his life.

The typical observant family will produce many children. In previous generations, this was the common practice in most cultures. Due to high mortality rates amongst infants, parents felt compelled to have many children to ensure the family’s future. As modern medicine improved the chance of survival, parents in most Western countries began to have less children. Despite these shifts, many Orthodox couples remain loyal to the spirit of the tradition. It is still common today to find religious families with ten or more children. The preferred marrying age is between the ages of eighteen and twenty two, and pregnancy usually begins soon after. In many of the North African and Middle Eastern Sephardic communities, it was common for girls to marry as young as thirteen.

Although not stated explicitly, it could be assumed that the families portrayed in the story had many children. This was the norm at the time. When Jacob and Rochelle had their first son and daughter, they wished to continue to have more children. Rochelle dreamed to have a family like her own, suggesting that she, too, was one of many siblings. After the first two births, Rochelle had difficulty becoming pregnant.¹⁵⁷ Her parents and husband tried many remedies to assist her to become pregnant. The people in the town began to suspect Rochelle of holding modern views. Rochelle was saddened by these rumors.

¹⁵⁵ Ecclesiastes 11:6

¹⁵⁶ King James Bible

¹⁵⁷ Sabato, Emet Me’Eretz, P. 94

All of the above displays clearly the attitudes of the traditional culture towards family size. Birth control was not commonly practiced in the community. Women who did not have large families were viewed with suspicion. These attempts show the underlying premise that raising many children is a core value in the traditional observant society. The issue of rearing numerous children is not unique to the observant Jewish family. However, this issue clearly highlights the need for paternal stability and availability. A transient father figure would not succeed in maintaining a large family unit.

9.10 Teaching a Trade

Due to the rabbinic nature of the characters, most of the novella centers on the fathers trying to encourage their sons to continue the mission of Talmudic scholarship. Little is mentioned regarding the training of the sons in a trade or business. In one section of the book, Sabato describes the life of an orphaned boy who was encouraged to learn a trade to sustain himself.

Ezra Farchi was the local jeweler. He trained many young men to perform the tasks of the trade. An orphaned boy was brought to his shop to be trained. He exposed the boy to every facet of the trade except for one. This area of expertise was reserved for his sons. The art of setting rare gems had many intricate details and Ezra would not share them with the other apprentices in the shop. The narrator explains that he shared this secret only with his sons to ensure their future success in the business. This is one example of how the father made sure to train the children in a trade, and be able to support themselves in the future.

9.11 Conclusions

This novella provides a broad perspective on Jewish fathering behavior. It portrays a long line of ancestry and avails a close look at how each generation

prepared the sons for the role of fathering. Until the period of enlightenment, the passing down of the tradition from father to son was relatively smooth and complete. Men felt a sense of pride to perform the various rituals exactly as their ancestors had before them. Since both rabbinic leaders and laymen were versed in Jewish law and philosophy, the message that was passed on remained pure and authentic. The traditional culture strongly promoted family life. Therefore, sons were naturally encouraged to marry and have children. Marrying age was considerably younger than in modern times, and the number of children produced was high.

In this traditional setting, the men were expected to behave in an exemplary fashion. They were loyal husbands and dedicated family men. They maintained a consistent and routine lifestyle, and dutifully provided for their family's basic needs. The religious education of the children was a core value and the fathers played an active role in their development. Nothing was left to chance. If the schooling was not worthy, the fathers would teach the children themselves.

This novella, as in other works of the author, highlights the break from tradition with the onset of modernity. The study of Torah did not remain pure as new subjects were introduced into the schools. As fathers encouraged their sons to become more knowledgeable in worldly matters, the dedication towards the tradition weakened. As new ideologies permeated the culture, the views towards marriage and raising children also began to change, although less dramatically than the broader society.

Jacob Spote is symbolic of the man who succeeded in integrating both worlds. Although he excelled in his secular studies, he was highly committed to the tradition. He married in the traditional fashion and became a dedicated family man. Jacob's son Max was influenced by the new philosophies and turned completely away from the tradition. He was swept up in the tide of world change and even played a key role in the formation of the socialist ideology. He became estranged from his family and culture. Along with the

many behavioral changes that he adopted, marriage and raising a family was not a priority. His academic career and social activism took precedence. It seemed that the illustrious traditional family lineage would come to an abrupt end.

In the final chapter, Max was jarred by a series of mysterious coincidences. He began to question his life and his involvement in the movement. He realized that something dear to him was missing. On a trip to Israel he randomly heard men praying in the tunes of his grandfather. This was the catalyst for his transformation and return to his traditional roots.

The title of this novella, "The Wheel of Fortune Turns in the World", suggests that there is a Heavenly accounting for all deeds performed by man. The reward for positive actions may be deferred for the benefit of a future generation. The first generations in the story made large deposits into the family's spiritual account. As the final member of the family tries to abandon his roots, unusual coincidences draw him back like a magnet. The author suggests that the merits of the forefathers may have protected Max from being totally cutoff from his ancestral roots, and losing his Jewish identity.

According to this belief, the impact of the father reaches well beyond his behavior towards his own children. His actions may influence the lives of his descendants for many generations to come. Contrary to the modern approach which emphasizes personal growth and satisfaction, this concept encourages the father to focus on the wellbeing of his progeny, even those that he may never live to see. A person's behavior should be directed for a greater good beyond his own temporary pleasure and needs. The more the father becomes aware of this spiritual dynamic, the more he will strive to perform good deeds and improve his character. This is perhaps one of the most significant messages of Jewish fathering.

Section 10

Depiction of Fatherhood in Novella 2:

Emet Me'Eretz Titzmach

10.1 Father as Role Model

The male characters in this novella are the narrator's relatives, starting with his grandfather and going back several generations.¹⁵⁸ These men were all rabbinic scholars from Halab. The elders of Halab had many common characteristics. Sabato writes repeatedly about these men in his works. The author uses the descriptions of these men as the prologue of this story. Sabato, like most Jews from Halab, shares a sense of pride for his ancestry. If the people of Halab are known to be proud of their community and its unique customs, they are even more proud of their wise sages.

אִם צוֹבָה עִיר שֶׁל חֲכָמִים סוֹפְרִים הִיְתָה. וּמִיּוֹחָדִים חֲכָמִיה בְּעוֹמֵק גְּאוּנִיּוֹתָם
וּבַחֲרִיפּוֹת שְׁכָלָם. חֲכָם חֲלָבִי שׁוֹנֵא פִּלְפּוֹל שֶׁל הַבַּל, וְאוֹהֵב סִבְרָה יִשְׂרָה. מִמַּעַט בְּדִיבּוֹר
וּמִרְבָּה בְּשִׁתִּיקָה. לְשׁוֹנוֹ קִצְרָה וְחֻדָּה. קִפְדָּן בְּלְבוּשׁוֹ, וְקִפְדָּן בְּכַבּוֹדוֹ. חוֹרֵז פְּנִינִים
בְּדְרוּשׁ, וְאִמְיָץ בְּפֶסֶק הַלְכָה. תִּקְיָף וְאִינוֹ נוֹשֵׂא פָנִים לְאִישׁ. לְפִי טִבְעוֹ, הַחֲכָם הַחֲלָבִי
אִינוֹ נִגְרֵר אַחֵר הַהֲמוֹן, עוֹמֵד עַל דַּעְתּוֹ, וּמַכִּיר בְּעֶרֶךְ עֲצֻמוֹ. לוֹעֵג לְחֲסִיד שׁוֹטָה, וְאוֹהֵב
אֲנָשֵׁי חֲכָמָה. נִהְנֵה מִמִּילְתָּא דְּבִדְיָחוּתָא, וְשִׁיחַת חוֹלִין שְׁלוֹ צְרִיכָה תִּלְמוּד.¹⁵⁹

The חֲכָם, or the wise sage, is the tradition's view of the ideal male. Sabato's grandfather, who plays a major role in his works, was considered a true חֲכָם חֲלָבִי, despite the fact that he left Halab at the age of nine. The Halab tradition

¹⁵⁸ The choice of the term "father figure" is partly due to the fact that children in the early culture of Aram Tzoba were raised in multigenerational homes. If they didn't grow up in the same home, they grew up in close proximity to the grandfathers and even the great grandfathers. As a result of this tightknit family unit, it was common to spend many hours in the care of grandparents as the parents dealt with the needs of the family. Sabato himself is a product of this family structure. His biological father is not mentioned in the entire work. His grandfather appears to fill the role of father as spiritual guide, teacher, and transmitter of the tribal customs. Therefore, this research will revert to additional father figures when the father is not mentioned.

¹⁵⁹ Sabato, Emet Me'Eretz, P. 144

was so strong that it survived the transition from Halab to Egypt, and from Egypt to Israel. Growing up under his grandfather's tutelage, Sabato gained a deep understanding of the behavior and mannerisms of the elders of Halab.

Sabato's grandfather was an intense thinker and avid learner. His thirst for knowledge was aided by his sharp, analytic approach to learning.

ובעיון דוקא. עיון חלבי. לימוד תלמוד שלא בעיון לא נחשב בעיניו לימוד.¹⁶⁰

The grandfather's trait of perpetual learning and growth, and his resolve to uncover the truth, left a lasting impact on the young Sabato.

Integrity and tenacity play an important role in this story. The protagonist, the narrator's scholarly ancestor, was involved in a dispute with the other rabbis. He was approached by the communal leaders to retract his rendering of a particular Jewish law. He adamantly refused, despite repeated attempts to persuade him. He believed his rendering was the truth, and for the truth he would sacrifice everything. He retired from his position in the rabbinic court, and hid away his personal manuscript of Talmudic commentary and halachic decisions. The eventual publication of this manuscript was a lifelong dream, never to be activated.

Seven generations later, the narrator discovers the manuscript and realizes that the ancestor was correct in his rendering. This characteristic of upholding the truth, regardless of the sacrifice involved, was passed down from generation to generation. This is one example of how the father serves as a role model for his children.

Another aspect of role modeling is the father's display of enthusiasm for matters dear to him. The son is readily exposed to the emotional subtext beneath the father's words and behavior. The passion and excitement of the father towards the rituals and practices will have a lasting effect on the son's attitudes.

¹⁶⁰ Sabato, Emet Me'Eretz, P. 146

Sabato describes his own personal love of liturgical poems, known as piyutim. The author weaves piyutim into the narrative of each of his works. These religious songs are known for their complex Hebrew and deep mystical meanings. From the positive examples set by his grandfather and father, Sabato learned to enjoy the piyutim from a young age. As he grew older, the author began to collect rare volumes of piyutim for his personal library.

אוהב פיוט וזמרה היה סבי זכרונו לברכה, והרבה בקשות ופזמונים למדנו ממנו.
...הרבה פיוטים ידע סבי על פה. פיוט שחיבר זקנו ושנכנס לספר הבקשות, לא שמענו
ממנו לעולם.¹⁶¹

The scholarly grandfather owned a large library of religious texts. The author's love of books in general was an outgrowth of this example.

ספריו של אדם מעידים עליו, ומאוצרו אתה למד על טבעו. ספרים רבים היו לסבא
באוצרו. שאלות ותשובות, פסקים ומנהגות, חידושים וביאורים, פיוטים ושירות,
מעשה בראשית וצפונות קבלה. ספרים ישנים וספרים חדשים, גדולים ועירים. אחר
פטירתו נתפזרו... אדם חוסך כל ימיו מפיתו, קובץ על יד על יד ובונה לו אוצר ספרים
על פי טעמו, ויש לו ממנו קורת רוח. כיוון שנפטר מן העולם מתפזרים ספריו וניטל
חן שלהם.¹⁶²

This is an additional aspect in which the positive behavior of the father figure serve as a model to emulate. It is important for the father to understand that what he values and how he behaves will be a strong factor in the future attitudes of the children.

10.2 Passing on Traditions

On one of his visits to his grandfather, the narrator asked why he never wrote down his Torah thoughts and Talmudic insights in a volume. The grandfather humbly explained that he was not worthy, that only great men like Maimonides deserved to write Torah works. In proving his point, he

¹⁶¹ Sabato, Emet Me'Eretz, Pp. 155-156

¹⁶² Sabato, Emet Me'Eretz, P. 154

explained that it was a family tradition, passed down from father to son, to refrain from publishing original Torah thoughts.

פעם אחת השיב לי - כך מקובלני מבית אבי אבא: משנה תורה לרמב"ם, הוא חיבור. בית יוסף למרון, הוא חיבור. פחות מכאן, אין זה חיבור.¹⁶³

The expression used in this sentence, "כך מקובלני מבית אבי אבא", this is the tradition handed down from the house of my father's father, is borrowed from the Babylonian Talmud.

תנו רבנן: פעם אחת נתקשרו שמים בעבים ונראית דמות לבנה בעשרים ותשעה לחדש, כסבורים העם לומר ראש חדש ובקשו בית דין לקדשו. אמר להם רבן גמליאל: כך מקובלני מבית אבי אבא, אין חדושה של לבנה פחותה מעשרים ותשעה יום ומחצה ושני שלישי שעה ושבעים ושלושה חלקים. ואותו היום מתה אמו של בן זוא והספידה רבן גמליאל הספד גדול, לא מפני שראויה לכך אלא כדי שידעו העם שלא קידשו בית דין את החדש.¹⁶⁴

Rabban Gamliel was the head of the Jewish people during the beginning of the Second Century. He wished to prove that the high court was mistaken regarding the declaration of the new moon.¹⁶⁵ This practice was based on the testimony of witnesses in the High Court in Jerusalem. Although the rabbis followed all of the correct procedures, Rabban Gamliel claimed the testimony was false. He held a secret mathematical formula that was passed down to him from his ancestors. According to his calculation, it was too early to declare the new moon. The witnesses were dismissed.

The phrase *מקובלני מבית אבי אבא* bears a sense of pride, of belonging to a special line of scholars. The narrator's grandfather used this expression to prove his point. Regarding the publication of books, his family had a rule, passed down from father to son, and he proudly upheld it. The message here is clear. Like Rabban Gamliel, the grandfather was a link in a long chain of

¹⁶³ Sabato, *Emet Me'Eretz*, P. 145

¹⁶⁴ Babylonian Talmud, Rosh Hashanah 25A

¹⁶⁵ This refers to the onset of a new calendar month.

tradition, passed down from father to son. The continuity of the tradition, depended on the ability of the son to accept the dictates of the father.

As a descendant of the family, the narrator was faced with a dilemma regarding publication of his own writings. If the family had a tradition not to publish their original Torah thoughts, then he would be forbidden as well. As the story unfolded, the narrator discovered that this ban was actually the result of an oath made by his ancestor. The oath was conditional and would expire in his generation. The narrator would be free to publish his writings. Before his death, the grandfather confessed that he regretted not publishing his own thoughts. He encouraged the narrator to fulfill this dream.

אותם ימים הודה לי. אמת מן הראוי היה לחבר חיבור. ואף אמר, בעזר השם יתברך,
ובחסדי, אתה תכתוב חיבור. דור שביעי אתה. הותר הנדר.¹⁶⁶

10.3 Storytelling as an Educational Tool

An important vehicle in the transmission of the tradition is storytelling. For children, stories possess magic, and listening to stories is a pleasurable experience. At the Passover Seder,¹⁶⁷ the father is commanded to retell the story of the slavery of the Jewish people in Egypt. The text that is used to tell the story is referred to as the Passover "*Haggadah*", from the same root as להגיד, to tell. The father is encouraged to arouse the children's curiosity, promoting them to ask questions. These questions become the basis for the story that is shared. This form of interaction is intimate and meaningful. The father's relaying of the Passover story plays an important part in fostering love for the tradition in the hearts of the children.

The narrator was keen to visit his grandfather and other relatives to listen to their tales of his ancestry. Many of Sabato's works are based on these

¹⁶⁶ Sabato, Emet Me'Eretz, P. 146

¹⁶⁷ The Seder is a festive family meal celebrating the Exodus from Egypt.

conversations. The mode of storytelling as a means to inspire the children is a common theme in Sabato's works.

10.4 Singing as a Vehicle of Education

The narrator visits the home of his relative, Madame Jamillo Shayo, hoping to borrow a rare volume from her husband Moise.¹⁶⁸ The Shayo's raised eight children, seven boys and one girl. Every Shabbat afternoon Moise would sit with the children at the table and sing the traditional Halab piyutim. The repertoire was the same every week. The children looked forward to these sessions and continued this custom long after they married. Singing was a beloved pastime for the Jews of Halab, both in the synagogue and at home, and Moise had done an exceptional job in passing down the tunes and the love for singing to the next generation.

The narrator adds that, as the boys grew older, Moise's sons introduced additional tunes from other Sephardic cultures. Jerusalem at the time was becoming a melting pot of traditions, as Jews from many countries had settled there. Moise would always begin with his family's traditional melodies. After a short time, the sons would overpower him with their new melodies. Moise saw no harm in their insistence to sing their songs, and this weekly power struggle seemed to work its way out amicably.

The narrator's grandfather was a purest in this regard. He would never have allowed this to occur in his home. No one dared sing the tunes of the other Sephardic cultures in his home. The only songs sung were the original melodies of Aram Tzoba (Halab). This unwavering loyalty to the ancestral melodies may have enhanced the respect that his family felt for the traditions of Halab.

10.5 Naming of the Children

¹⁶⁸ Sabato, *Emet Me'Eretz*, Chapter 4

In the Halab tradition, the naming of the children had very set rules. Children were named after the grandparents and other family members. While visiting his Aunt Victoria, the narrator wished to learn the reason behind her unusual name.¹⁶⁹ He received an entire lecture as to how children were traditionally named, unlike the modern custom of giving children names.

בנינו על שם קרובינו נקראים. ולפי סדר דוקא. מנהגנו, הבכור נקרא על שם אבי האב, השני על שם אבי האם, הבת הראשונה על שם אם האב, והשנייה על שם אם האם. ומקיימים בכך מצוות כיבוד אב ואם. שאר בנים ובנות נקראים על שם דודות זקנות, או חכמים חשובים.¹⁷⁰

The naming of the child was not a random act, left to the whim of the parents. Rather the tradition in Halab, and in many other Jewish communities, was very clear. The child was to bear the name of the ancestors. This custom was a fulfillment of the Biblical command to honor one's mother and father. The implied message was that every child was to become part of a chain. To give a child a new name was like an affront to the family, especially to a proud Halaby. The only name not consistent with this tradition was Victoria. Her name was part of a secret kept by the family for generations.

Victoria's older sister died at the age of three. The child's grandfather had just completed his manuscript of original Torah thoughts, and made a big feast to celebrate his achievement. The news of the sister's birth came during the party. When it came time to name her, the grandfather asked the father permission to name her. He wanted to give her the same name as his Torah volume. This was an unusual custom for the family.

The rabbis of the town had a dispute with the ancestor regarding a rendering of Jewish law. He refused to change his position and the rabbis placed a curse on the family. Soon after, tragedy befell the family and the young daughter died. The ancestor decided to resign from the rabbinic court and withheld his manuscript from publication. The next daughter to be born, Victoria, was also

¹⁶⁹ Victoria was not a Hebrew name. She was not named after a relative.

¹⁷⁰ Sabato, Emet Me'Eretz, P. 150

named by the grandfather. This name was given as a declaration that, one day, he would be victorious over the rabbis and the truth would be revealed. Through this incident, the narrator describes in great detail the traditional procedure of naming the children, and the reason for the deviation that occurred in his family.

10.6 Interaction between Father and Child

The grandfather portrayed in this story was a dedicated scholar, and never wasted time. Recreation was not part of the culture and fathers were not usually playful with their children. The narrator describes the unusual relationship that the grandfather had with his granddaughter, Victoria's older sister. Born on the day he completed his volume, she found special favor in his eyes. Although his personal study was off limits to every other member of the family, this granddaughter was welcomed inside and playfully attended to by the grandfather himself. The grandfather's playfulness was clearly a break from the norm. During that time, father's acted more as disciplinarians than as playmates with their children.

10.7 Father as Provider and Protector

After the big dispute, the ancestor became recluse, refusing to participate in communal leadership. Many people came to persuade him to change his mind. He felt that the truth was on his side, and eventually they would see that he was right. He ignored these visits and busied himself with his writing and with his business.

התנצל שטרוד הוא בספרו ובמסחרו, ונשתמט מהם.¹⁷¹

This brief reference teaches that the wise חכם, who dedicated most of his waking hours to teach and lead the community, maintained a small business

¹⁷¹ Sabato, Emet Me'Eretz, P. 152

for his personal livelihood. The narrator emphasizes numerous times in the story that the Halab community followed the teachings and philosophy of Maimonides. Maimonides was a strong proponent of the שביל הזהב, the golden rule, to live life in moderation. The men were expected to study Torah and to make a living to support the family. Maimonides himself was a medical doctor for the Sultan in Egypt. The narrator's ancestor did not depend on the community funds for support. He preferred to live according to the advice of the Scriptures:

יגיע כפיך כי תאכל אשריך וטוב לך.¹⁷²

עוכר ביתו בוצע בצוע, ושונא מתנות יחיה.¹⁷³

One will be most satisfied in life if he eats from the sweat of his brow and the labor of his own hands, and not to depend on gifts from others. The verses suggest that one must develop a loathing for gifts if he chooses to live on the correct path.

The ancestor understood this need for balance, and was capable to utilize his time to excel in both spiritual and physical endeavors. This was the true vision of Maimonides, and this was the practice of the wise men of Halab.

10.8 Procreation and Family Size

As stated earlier, the narrator describes his visit to the home of the Shayo family. The family raised eight children, seven boys and one girl. Each of the Shayo children married, a natural occurrence in the traditional family. Eight children was seen as a normal size family in the Halab culture.

10.9 Teaching Torah to the Children

¹⁷² Psalms 128:2

¹⁷³ Proverbs 15:27

This novella does not have direct reference to this aspect of fathering. All of the characters are learned men, steeped in Talmudic knowledge, and their children followed closely in their footsteps. There is no mention as to the training of the son by the father. However, the frequent discussions between the narrator and his grandfather are conversations of Torah nature. It is evident that the narrator learned regularly from him. When discussing the grandfather's love of Halab liturgical songs, the narrator uses the word למדנו, we learned.

...והרבה בקשות ופזמונים למדנו ממנו.¹⁷⁴

The narrator and his siblings were taught to chant the special songs by the grandfather. This is one example of the Torah education that the children received from the significant father figure.

As stated above, much of the narrator's education was through example. His grandfather had a certain method of study, the Halaby method of deep inquiry, עיון חלבי. This method was passed down from father to son for generations. As a devoted grandson, the narrator was privy to the method of study of the elders, and was successful in integrating this method in his own studies. The grandfather served as the father figure in training the children in the study of Torah.

The role of the grandfather in the teaching of Torah to the child is the topic of a Talmudic discussion.

עד היכן חייב אדם ללמד את בנו תורה? אמר רב יהודה אמר שמואל: כגון זבולון בן דן, שלימדו אבי אביו מקרא ומשנה ותלמוד, הלכות ואגדות. מיתבי: למדו מקרא - אין מלמדו משנה; ואמר רבא: מקרא - זו תורה! כזבולון בן דן ולא כזבולון בן דן, כזבולון בן דן - שלמדו אבי אביו, ולא כזבולון בן דן - דאילו התם מקרא, משנה ותלמוד, הלכות ואגדות, ואילו הכא מקרא לבד.

ואבי אביו מי מיחייב? והתניא: (דברים יא) ולמדתם אותם את בניכם - ולא בני בניכם, ומה אני מקיים (דברים ד) והודעתם לבניך ולבני בניך? לומר לך, שכל המלמד

¹⁷⁴ Sabato, Emet Me'Eretz, P. 155

את בן בנו תורה, מעלה עליו הכתוב כאילו למדו לו ולבנו ולבן בנו עד סוף כל הדורות! הוא דאמר כי האי תנא; דתניא: ולמדתם אותם את בניכם - אין לי אלא בניכם, בני בניכם מניין? תלמוד לומר: והודעתם לבניך ולבני בניך; אם כן, מה תלמוד בניכם? בניכם - ולא בנותיכם.

אמר ר' יהושע בן לוי: כל המלמד את בן בנו תורה, מעלה עליו הכתוב כאילו קבלה מהר סיני, שנאמר: והודעתם לבניך ולבני בניך, וסמך ליה: יום אשר עמדת לפני ה' א-להיך בחורב.¹⁷⁵

The Talmud suggests that there is an extra spiritual advantage when the grandfather teaches Torah to the grandson. Learning from the elder generation creates a more authentic experience. The Talmud compares this to the receiving of the Torah from God Himself on Mount Sinai.

Another statement in this passage refers to the great reward awaiting the grandfather who invests the time to teach his grandchildren. He will be rewarded as if he taught every future descendant that came from him until eternity. Since Torah study is considered one of the most highly rewarded activities in the Jewish tradition, the magnitude of this spiritual reward is immeasurable.

Sabato's grandfather plays a major role in all of his stories. From his pristine character, his brilliant scholarship, his unswerving devotion to the Halab traditions, and his leadership qualities, one could appreciate the author's deep reverence of this remarkable personality. For Sabato, to learn Torah from his grandfather was equal to the revelation on Mount Sinai.

The fact that the tradition discusses the importance of teaching the grandchildren is another support to the issue of availability and stability of the father figure. The Jewish father is destined to remain part of the children's lives long after they marry and produce children of their own. A transient father would never succeed in fulfilling this role. This continuing paternal presence is a significant factor in the rearing of healthy, productive members of society.

¹⁷⁵ Babylonian Talmud, Kiddushin, 30A

10.10 Teaching a Trade

No reference is made regarding teaching the son a trade in this novella. The sons, however, continued the family mission of Torah study, teaching, and rabbinic involvement. There is a slight reference to the early ancestor's involvement in a business, and perhaps the line of business was continued in the next generations. There is no proof of this in the text.

10.11 Conclusion

The Heavenly God is often referred to as אבינו מלכינו, Our Father, Our King. These two titles are completely opposite. The father is the prime example of everlasting love and kindness. The son seeks the warmth and closeness of the father at all times. The king is the symbol of power. He is to be feared and respected from a distance. Only a select few will have the privilege to assist him. To be a Father and a King requires a unique sense of balance.

In this novella, the ancestral father figure behaved like a king. His unyielding nature was felt in the family circle as well as in the public sphere. He commanded the respect of all who came in contact with him. People understood his greatness and were careful when approaching him. When he vowed that he and his family would refrain from publishing their original Torah thoughts for seven generations, no one dared to question. This is the mark of a true patriarch. Following his influence, each generation felt compelled to carry out the tradition¹⁷⁶ in the fullest sense of the word. Each of the fathers had succeeded in imbuing the sons with a sense of responsibility toward the family's special calling. This authoritative characteristic was still present six generations later in the guise of the narrator's grandfather. He was like a living testimony of the mannerisms and behavior of the sages of old.

¹⁷⁶ Both the Jewish tradition and the vow.

This novella awakens a sense of nostalgia for a time long past. Although the narrator was the next generation of the lineage, he does not seem to fit the model portrayed by his exacting, authoritarian ancestors. As the vow is lifted, and the narrator is granted permission to publish his writings, another shift seems to have taken place. The narrator does not speak with the same sharpness as his ancestors. His tones are soft and inviting. Although he was able to serve his grandfather and study with him, the narrator was a new immigrant to modernity. Around the world, kings became a thing of the past.¹⁷⁷ At the same time, the mission of fatherhood would also sustain major changes. Fathers will need to devise new methods and approaches if they wish to keep their children loyal to the tradition. What worked in the past will not suffice in the future. This is one of the underlying messages of the story.

It is clear that the men portrayed in this story were active partners in the rearing of the children. Their presence and involvement remained constant, and their eyes remained focused on the spiritual and physical growth of their progeny.

¹⁷⁷ The ability to teach children about God as King has weakened in modern times. Since the king concept is almost obsolete, it is challenging to instill in children the fear of the Almighty King.

Section 11

Depiction of Fatherhood in Novella 3:

Shivrei Luchot

11.1 Father as Role Model

This novella is a tribute to the author's grandfather. As in the other works, the grandfather is referred to in context with the special group of rabbis from the Halab community of old. Although the grandfather left Syria when he was nine, the cultural and religious roots of this ancient Jewish sect ran deep, allowing the tradition to survive even amongst those who moved away geographically. The story opens with a description of the grandfather.

סבי זכרונו לברכה חכם מחכמי ארם צובה היה. וארם צובה עיר של חכמים וסופרים
היתה. כל חכם וחכם מחכמיה נתייחד במלבושו ונתייחד בתוארו.¹⁷⁸

After explaining the hierarchy of the rabbinate in Aram Tzoba, the various titles and unique dress of each of the different rabbinic levels, the narrator shares the ultimate title held by his grandfather.

ועוד תואר אחד נכבד מאוד היה בארם צובה. חכם מעיין. חכם שזכה לתואר זה
חשוב היה בין החכמים. סבי זכרונו לברכה נקרא חכם מעיין. ...אחר כמה שנים נוסף
לו לסבי עוד שבח על שבחו, ונקרא מעיין פשטן.¹⁷⁹

The grandfather had the unique ability to “iron out” every difficult question that arose in the house of study. He was equally revered by the students and the other rabbis for his breath of knowledge and sharp analytical abilities.

This description of the wise sages from Aram Tzoba provides a clear picture into the behavior and attitudes of these traditional Jewish men. This group

¹⁷⁸ Sabato, Emet Me'Eretz, P. 175

¹⁷⁹ Sabato, Emet Me'Eretz, P. 177

was known for its rigorous study habits and piety. These men were exemplary role models for their children.

In the novella *גלגל חוזר בעולם*, there are two references to the characters seeing images of their fathers. This vision assisted them in times of need. The narrator hints at a similar positive image that he forged for himself. In chapter two, the narrator describes the grandfather's ability to mesmerize the audience at his monthly sermons. He was able to speak to people on different levels, leaving all of them equally uplifted and inspired. When the sermon was over, there was a tremendous display of respect for the great rabbi. The townspeople would form two lines and allow him to pass between, heads lowered out of deference. There were even those that kissed his hand. The grandfather would smile and greet them and shower them with blessings.

אשרי עין ראתה כל אלה. ילד הייתי, וכשלמדתי במסכת יומא על הכבוד שנהגו בכהן
הגדול ביום הכיפורים כשיצא בשלום מבית קודשי הקדשים, דוגמה עשיתי לי
מיציאתו של סבא לאחר הדרשה.¹⁸⁰

The narrator alludes here to a phrase in the prayers of Yom Kippur. When the cantor concludes the section of the ancient Temple service, recalling how the High Priest performed the difficult duties of the day, the prayer continues with a section lamenting the destruction of the Second Temple. This section begins with a mournful sigh stating, "אשרי עין ראתה כל אלה", Fortunate is the eye who beheld such a sight. How unfortunate are those that can no longer witness the service in the Temple.

The narrator felt proud to see his grandfather being shown respect by the entire community. This image will remain for him as a vehicle for inspiration for the rest of his life. This type of role modelling by the father figure is important for the son's future spiritual growth.

The narrator's grandfather had a stern disposition. He had a sharp tongue and could be highly critical, with a touch of sarcasm. His opinion was strong

¹⁸⁰ Sabato, *Emet Me'Eretz*, P. 182

and he was not shy to vocalize it. This attribute, referred to by the narrator as קפדן, left an impression on him. Although only a young boy at the time of his arrival in Israel, he later recognized the harsh truth in the way the family was treated as new immigrants. The narrative includes many expressions of sarcasm regarding the family's early experiences in the new land. This tone may have been a result of the example that he heard from his grandfather. The narrator's use of sarcasm is also aimed at the variant behavior of other ethnic groups. Some examples of these sharp comments in the narrative:

1. משל האשכנזים היו חסידים והיו מתנגדים. לא החסידים היו חסידים ולא המתנגדים היו מתנגדים.¹⁸¹

The narrator seems to humorously make fun of the Ashkenazi Jews who were not as loyal to the traditions of their sect. They would cling to trivial aspects of their tradition and ignore the important ones.

2. ולא כללנו התימנים בכלל לפי שעדה בפני עצמה הם.¹⁸²

This expression is typical amongst Sephardic Jews of other geographic origins: Morocco, Algiers, Tunis, Lybia, etc. The Yemenite Jews are commonly considered a tribe amongst themselves. The narrator may have intended this line to be a mere statement of fact, but in the eyes of the community that reads him and understands the cultural tensions, this line may arouse a cynical smile.

3. על שם החלום קראו למקום מעברה, ועל שם פתרונו – אזבסטוניים.¹⁸³

The narrator hints at the painful history of the era. Poor Jews were gathered from dozens of countries and thrown together in makeshift housing projects. These housing arrangements were initially intended for temporary use, until better solutions could be found. The narrator's use of language in this expression is sharp and witty. These places had two names, one for the

¹⁸¹ Sabato, Emet Me'Eretz, P. 183

¹⁸² Sabato, Emet Me'Eretz, P. 184

¹⁸³ Sabato, Emet Me'Eretz, P. 186

intended temporary plan (מעברה from the word transfer), and one for the long term solution that they ultimately became (אזבסטוניים, pathetic dwellings of asbestos).

4. שכל מי שעולה לתורה בשבת עושה לו החזן מי שבירך,
משברך (pronounced M'shabrech) כך היו החלבים אומרים.¹⁸⁴

This small parenthetical phrase shows the divergence of the Halab tradition from the norm in Israel at the time. Even in small issues like the pronunciation of the word Misheberach, the blessing given to someone who is called to the Torah. The author's insistence to highlight the Halab way may be an extension of his education.

5. ועוד מוסיף לו טומוס של ברכות כיז השם הטובה עליו ופי שיעלה על דעתו באותה
שעה.¹⁸⁵

The narrator is clearly making light of the practice of the cantor in the scene. The cantor is portrayed as trying to butter up the honored congregant. By ad-libbing phrases, beseeching God to bestow more and more blessings upon the individual, the cantor was hoping to secure a larger donation from him.

6. וכל ההילולא לכבוד רבי שמעון שהיה ניזון מחרובים ומי מעיין י"ג שנים שנטמן
במערה.¹⁸⁶

The narrator relays how the Moroccan Jews would commemorate the day known as Lag Ba'Omer. According to the tradition, Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai died on the date 18 Iyar, approximately two thousand years ago (160 C.E.). The narrator describes in great detail the lavish banquet that the Jews of Morocco prepared on this occasion. Back in Morocco, seventeen animals were slaughtered for the feast and over three hundred people would participate. In Halab, the Jews never commemorated this day. The Moroccan custom appeared bizarre to the Halab Jews. The narrator concludes the paragraph

¹⁸⁴ Sabato, Emet Me'Eretz, P. 187

¹⁸⁵ Sabato, Emet Me'Eretz, P. 187

¹⁸⁶ Sabato, Emet Me'Eretz, P. 190

with a touch of sarcasm. The saintly Rabbi Shimon sustained himself on a diet of carob and water for thirteen years. His Moroccan followers remembered his life with a feast of fatty meat. This use of humor in the narrative was typical of the grandfather's cynical approach. The father figure's behavior and comments are watched closely and mirrored by the children in the future.

.7 כאן אין מי שישאל ואין מי ששיב.¹⁸⁷

The grandfather was approached by the local synagogue committee to resolve a question that arose. The young narrator was attending to his grandfather, as he did on so many occasions, when the men arrived. The grandfather listened carefully to their question and quickly gave them a brief and practical answer. The guests were so impressed they wished to invite the rabbi to pray with them on the High Holy Days. After the guests left, the grandfather confided that the question they asked was utterly ridiculous. They didn't need a rabbi to resolve it. They could have asked any child from Halab and he could have given them the same answer. He was accustomed to resolving serious questions about divorce, civil disputes, or dietary laws. Out of despair, he blurted out something in Arabic, "Here there is no one to ask and no one to answer."

This remark was not intended to ridicule, but to express the grandfather's frustration in his new surroundings. He realized how special his community in Halab was, how learned the people were, and how significant he felt there. Although he had fulfilled a lifelong dream by coming to the Holy land, he was now realizing that life was never going to be the same again. Here in Israel there was no one to ask and no one to answer.

All of the above examples show that the attitudes and mannerisms of the father figure are observed by the son, and emulated by him. In numerous sections, the narrator displays similar wit and sarcasm like the grandfather.

¹⁸⁷ Sabato, Emet Me'Eretz, P. 192

The strength of character of the grandfather comes to a climax during the quarrel on Yom Kippur. The narrator describes the leadership qualities of his grandfather and his ability to command the attention of the crowd.

רגיל היה בארם צובא להנהיג קהילתו ביד רמה...ואז קם ממקומו והלך לתיבה.
הליכתו גאה ותקיפה היתה, ועשתה רושם בבית הכנסת. תיכף שקט בית הכנסת.
עמד סבא לפני התיבה, החזיר פניו לקהל, הרהר כמה רגעים כדרך שהיה נוהג לפני
דרוש, התבונן סביב סביב בעיניו השחורות והחודרות, פתח ואמר בעיניים
דומעות...¹⁸⁸

The argument in the synagogue left the grandfather stunned. He had never seen such behavior back in Aram Tzoba. When the words turned into physical provocation, the grandfather decided to intervene. He displayed tremendous presence and strength. In the same fashion that he used to lead his flock in Aram Tzoba, he stood before the new congregation and commanded their full attention. He stood silently before the people, eyeing them carefully, making sure he was engaging with every soul in the room. His brief words were effective and the people calmly resumed the services.

The narrator never lived in Aram Tzoba. He never saw his grandfather stand before his congregation. He never witnessed the monthly sermon first hand. Yet, from his close association and the countless stories, he was able to recreate the image of his grandfather in action in his younger days. This incident only confirmed what he understood inside.

סבא, שתקיף בדעתו היה כדרך חכמי ארם צובה שתקיפים הם, אמר להם, שאלה של
הלכה היא, ואני פוסק הלכות בבית הכנסת ולא אתם.¹⁸⁹

The grandfather was a strong, opinionated man. The narrator adds that this trait was common amongst the wise men of Aram Tzoba. He knew how to assert his authority on others.

¹⁸⁸ Sabato, Emet Me'Eretz, P. 199

¹⁸⁹ Sabato, Emet Me'Eretz, P. 201

Due to his brilliance and unyielding personality, this role model posed a great challenge for the narrator. Growing up in his presence may have been difficult and demanding. Although the narrator understood that he would never become like the grandfather, he was still inspired to learn from him as much as he could. In summary, the grandfather was the ultimate role model.

11.2 Teaching Torah to the Children

When the grandfather was three he was sent to learn in a Talmud Torah.¹⁹⁰ This was the norm for the children of Halab. The fathers made sure that the children were literate at the earliest possible age. At his first lesson, the young boy refused to cooperate with the teacher. The boy suffered a severe lashing due to his stubborn refusal to cooperate. The father was called to the school.

ואביו חכם גדול היה, נתעטף ובא אצלו.¹⁹¹

This language shows the urgency that the father showed in the matter. His child had reached the age of education, and he wanted to make sure that he was on the right track. The father asked the boy why he refused to learn. The boy explained that this was a trick so he wouldn't have to work hard in the future. The father understood that his son was very clever and would eventually excel in all of his studies.

11.3 Father as Provider and Protector

כמנהג הרבה מן החכמים בארם צובה, לא נתפרנס סבי מן התורה.¹⁹²

The grandfather followed the practice of the men of Aram Tzoba and maintained a business in addition to his Torah studies. This practice went according to the rule that one was not meant to make his livelihood from the Torah. The grandfather was a salesman of fabrics in the local market. His

¹⁹⁰ A religious school with no secular studies.

¹⁹¹ Sabato, Emet Me'Eretz, P. 178

¹⁹² Sabato, Emet Me'Eretz, P. 179

store would open for the few hours needed to support his family, and he would then return to his main occupation of Talmudic study. The narrator adds that this practice stemmed from the philosophy of Maimonides. The vision was to excel in Torah study while spending some time of the day at work to maintain the family. Supporting the family was a responsibility of the father.

This practice was questioned by a visiting rabbi from Palestine. When the rabbi entered the house of study he posed the students a question in Jewish law. They did not know the answer, and at once directed him to the market where the grandfather worked. When the visitor arrived at his shop, the grandfather quickly completed his transaction, closed his shop, and brought the visitor back to the house of study. He showed him a rare volume of law that dealt with his query. Once the visitor understood the greatness of the grandfather in Talmudic knowledge, he asked the other rabbis, "Why is this man wasting time in the market selling fabric? He belongs here in the house of study!"

וכי נטרפה עליכם דעתכם חס ושלום. כל כך הרבה יש בידכם ואתם מניחים אותו
שיתלבט בין גלילים של אריגים? כבר אמרנו שמה שהיה מתמיה לחכם מארץ
ישראל, לא היה מתמיה בעיניהם. "יפה תלמוד תורה עם דרך ארץ, שיגיעת שניהם
משכחת עוון".¹⁹³

The men of Halab knew how to balance their lives. They were capable to work and support their families, while at the same time maintain a serious routine of Torah study.

11.4 Interaction between Father and Son

The grandfather was very strict. He did not engage in idle chatter and had a propensity for remaining silent. This characteristic silence is mentioned many

¹⁹³ Sabato, Emet Me'Eretz, P. 180, Mishnah Avot 2:2

times in Sabato's works. Since his routine was packed with work and Torah study, there was not much room left for playful time with the children.

After his arrival to Israel, the grandfather was amazed at every small achievement that took place in the newly established state. Every tree planted made him swell with pride. Once, while walking with his grandson in Jerusalem, he heard some children playing in the distance. He stopped to listen to them. He was overwhelmed with joy that these children were speaking the holy language that only the wise rabbis in Halab knew. This was a healthy sign for the growing nation in its new homeland. The grandfather approached the boy and asked if he could repeat what he said to his friends. The boy looked at the old man strangely and said, "What's it your business?" The grandfather, who was a *ḥafetz*, a stringent type himself, just smiled.

This reference about the grandfather being a *ḥafetz* says much about his mode of interaction. He was exacting, short, and even impatient at times. Although he would not have tolerated his own children to speak that way, his smile was a hint that he admired the boy for putting him in his place. The boy reminded the grandfather of himself.

11.5 Passing Down of Traditions

As the Jews gathered in the newly established State of Israel, they began to form new communities. It wasn't always possible for Jews of a particular heritage to settle together. The mix of cultures and traditions was often a source of tension, especially in the realm of religious observance. Although much of the structure of prayer was the same, there were many differences among the various sects. The tension between the groups was felt during every prayer service.

שכל אחד סבור שמנהג קהילתו משובח הוא משל חבירו, ומתאמץ להעמידו על תילו,
משום 'אל תטוש תורת אמך'.¹⁹⁴

In the other works, Sabato referred to this kind of tribal loyalty as מנהג אבותינו בדינו, the traditions of the fathers in our hands. In this novella he chose a verse from the Proverbs which includes the teachings of the mother to express this continuity of the tradition. It is important to note that Sabato interchanged the father and mother as the symbol for parental guidance.

שמע בני מוסר אביך ואל תטוש תורת אמך.¹⁹⁵

The passing down of the prayer format, or nusach, was the responsibility of the father. Each sect was passionate for their nusach, as this was an expression of respect for the ancestors that passed the tradition down. The grandfather was extremely passionate about his nusach from Halab. After relocating to Israel, it took a long time to find a suitable place to pray. He could not tolerate the prayers being sung in any other nusach.

סבא רגיל היה בנוסח ארם צובה, ודקדקן בנוסח היה, וקפדן בדקדוק היה, ויודע נגן היה. לפיכך, קשה היה לקבוע את מקומו באחד מבתי הכנסת הללו. ובכל שבת ושבת הלכנו למקום אחר, ולא ערב בעיניו.¹⁹⁶

The grandfather would only feel comfortable praying in the nusach that he learned from his father. Especially around the High Holy Days, a Jew longed for the familiar tunes of his ancestors. The grandfather could not satisfy this need in the new country.

ובפרט בימים הנוראים שכל אדם כרוך בגעגועים אחר תפילות כנוסח קהילתו ונוסח אחר אינו מעלה חן לפניו, שאין מעורר לתשובה אלא ניגון של בית אבא.¹⁹⁷

The High Holy Days are a time of repentance. The prayers are enhanced by the special melodies, calling the worshipper to return to his roots and leave his mistaken ways. For Jews from every background, the melodies that pull

¹⁹⁴ Sabato, Emet Me'Eretz, P. 185

¹⁹⁵ Proverbs 1:8

¹⁹⁶ Sabato, Emet Me'Eretz, P. 185

¹⁹⁷ Sabato, Emet Me'Eretz, P. 192

on the heart strings the most are the melodies from בית אבא, from the father's house. The passing down of the nusach from generation to generation is the responsibility of the father.

Training the child to pray is a long and complex mission. It requires a lot of repetition and consistency. The children who join their fathers in communal worship tend to learn the mechanics and melodies through experience. The narrator was privileged to grow up praying next to his grandfather.

כל זמן המריבה ישבתי ליד סבא זכרונו לברכה.¹⁹⁸

This was the regular place for the boy to sit in the synagogue, alongside his grandfather. He had the privilege to watch and listen closely to every aspect of prayer as it was meant to be prayed in the tradition of Aram Tzoba.

11.6 Marriage, Circumcision, Procreation, Teaching a Trade

These aspects of fathering behavior did not appear in this story.

11.7 Conclusion

Fathering in the Jewish perspective does not end when the children grow up. The paternal obligation to help the children marry is an extension of the philosophy of continuity. Even though the expressed obligation to support and feed the children may cease at a certain age, the responsibility for facilitating their marriage remains. As part of the command to produce children, the rabbis explain that this obligation is dispelled only after the birth of a grandson and a granddaughter. Therefore the father's mission continues well after the children have matured.

The tradition requires the grandfather to educate the grandchildren in the teachings of the Torah. Although the father holds the main responsibility, the grandfather is requested to supplement in this area. The parameters of this

¹⁹⁸ Sabato, Emet Me'Eretz, P. 198

division of labor are not defined by the sources. Each family may determine the level of involvement of the grandfather. Today, since most of the education of the children is carried out in schools, the teachers are viewed as agents of the parents. In practical terms, the grandfather could potentially dispel his obligation by contributing towards the children's school fees. The Halacha discusses the obligation of the grandfather to remit tuition fees in the event that the father is indigent, or deceased. It appears that if the father is able to support, the grandfather would not be obligated to do so.¹⁹⁹

This novella highlights the unique relationship between the narrator and his grandfather. The grandfather was a living example of the authentic religious lifestyle as practiced for many generations back in Halab. Every facet of his life was guided by Jewish law. His involvement in the Torah education of the grandson was not circumstantial. This was a fulfillment of the Biblical command to teach Torah to the children and to the grandchildren. As part of the philosophy of building continuity, the grandfather's involvement in the grandchildren's spiritual development is critical. When the grandson is taught by the grandfather, it is like he received the Torah on Mount Sinai. The grandfather is a link to a distant past, a carrier of an ancient message from his grandfather before him. This has been a major factor in the successful transmission of the Jewish tradition from generation to generation.

The parent-child dynamic is inherently different from the grandparent-grandchild relationship. The typical grandparent showers the grandchild with love and warmth, rarely dealing with discipline. Since the grandparent is not directly involved in the child's daily maintenance, he is removed from much of the tension that arises in the home. As the child matures, he undergoes a process of individuation, causing an invisible wedge between himself and the parent. This process of self-activation does not have as much influence on the relationship between grandparent and grandchild.

¹⁹⁹ See Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah, 245.

The author dedicated this entire story to the life of his maternal grandfather. Rabbi Shwekey was a revered and distinguished leader amongst the Halab Jewish community in Cairo. Although he had a stern and strong-headed disposition, he understood how to relate well to his grandchildren and foster a positive relationship. The grandfather was very involved in the author's religious development. The grandfather was instrumental in the author's career choice as a rabbi, educator, and writer.

The title of the story, "The Broken Tablets", is both a tribute and a lament for the author's grandfather. Although he arrived in Israel with his complete faculties, and could have assumed a proper rabbinic post, the grandfather was sidelined from communal service. The author hints at the ethnic prejudice that existed in Israel at the time, and the isolation of many of the Sephardic Jews from mainstream society. The grandfather, like many new immigrants to the early State of Israel, was not able to find meaningful work in his new surroundings. Having been granted the privilege to care regularly for his grandfather, the author was able to witness his greatness firsthand.

Section 12

Volume 2: Tium Kavannot

12.1 Book Details

Title: תיאום כוונות : 30 שנה למלחמת יום הכיפורים

Publisher: ידיעות אחרונות, ספרי חמד, ספרי עליית הגג. תל אביב, ישראל

Series: פרוזה : ספרים בעריכת עליזה ציגלר

Copyright: 1999

Length: 167 Pages

Typeset and design: רם-הוצאה לאור בע"מ, הרצליה, ישראל

Printer: יש אופסט, ישראל

ISBN: 965-511-596-8

Paper Size: A5

Jacket: Hard bound

Front Cover: Olive green background. Displays photo of Israeli soldier sitting on a tank, gazing into the distance. The photo is taken from a scene in the movie that was based on the novella. Behind the tank is an image of the moon surrounded by black smoke. Both of these have relevance to the story.

Back Cover: Recommendations by Israeli President Shimon Peres and literary critics

Awards: Sapir Prize, Israel

English Translation: "Adjusting Sights", October 2006, Toby Press, CT. USA

Jacket: Available in hard and soft cover

English Translation: Hillel Hankin

ISBN: 1 902881 70 2

12.2 Symbolism of the Cover

The olive green background represents the uniform of the Israeli army. The tank in the picture is a symbol of strength, while the billowing black smoke in the background represents destruction and chaos. In the midst of the black smoke shines a full moon. In religious texts, the moon is a symbol of the Jewish people. Just as the moon grows and diminishes during the monthly cycle, the Jewish people will have strong periods in their history where they will shine, and weak times where they will seemingly disappear.

The story depicts one of the most threatening times for the State of Israel: the 1973 Yom Kippur War. The soldier sitting upon the tank is gazing into the distance, with a reflective look on his face. Both the soldier and the tank are completely clean, giving the impression of post war reminiscing. This autobiographical story was based on the author's experience in the war.

12.3 Symbolism of the Title

The title תיאום כוונת, Adjusting Sights, holds a double meaning. The literal meaning refers to the optical tool used by the soldiers in the tank corps to set the distance of their missiles. Like a rifle, the tank shooter requires a gauge (in Hebrew כוונת) to set his sights before shooting. During the Yom Kippur War the Israeli army was caught by surprise, and the soldiers did not have time to prepare the necessary equipment for battle. The narrator went into battle without a working optic sight. The symbolic meaning of the title refers to the resetting of life goals. The word כוונה means intent or direction. In the heat of battle, as the narrator ran from a burning tank, he took a vow. If he would survive the war, he would dedicate his life to Torah study and teaching. This "adjustment of sights" was a direct result of what he went through during the

Yom Kippur War. As promised, the narrator was true to his word, and went on to become a Talmudic scholar and educator.

12.4 Brief Synopsis

The story begins on Yom Kippur, 1973. While the Israeli public was standing in prayer on the holiest day of the year, the country was attacked by five Arab nations. Haim (Sabato himself) and Dov were childhood friends that grew up together in Jerusalem. The two boys were called up to serve in the tank corps in the Golan Heights. On the first day of war, the boys were separated. The battle was fierce and many casualties were sustained on the Israeli side. Haim survived but Dov disappeared without a trace.

The story portrays Haim's search for information regarding Dov. Like a detective, the narrator pieces together clues, only to discover that Dov was killed on the first day of battle. After the war, Haim took part in an army inquiry to resolve many of the unexplained events that occurred during the war. Haim hoped to learn how Dov was killed. Answers were not found for the narrator's query. The story is emotionally charged, filled with graphic battle scenes as experienced by the author.

Section 13

Depiction of Fatherhood in Adjusting Sights

Fathering Behavior in Adjusting Sights

The work *Adjusting Sights* deals primarily with the experiences of Haim (Sabato), a young soldier, in the battlefield during the Yom Kippur War. Few scenes are portrayed that deal with the home environment. Details of the father's interaction with the son are sparing. Therefore, the few citing of fathering behavior and other references to the father figure will be presented chronologically as they appeared in the story.

13.1 Chapter One

Haim and Dov were preparing to go to war. Dov's mother was vocally apprehensive about her son's departure. He tried to soothe her worries. "We are going for a short trip and coming right back", Dov told her. "I hope we get there before the front line soldiers finish the job."

²⁰⁰ ואביו מפסיק לרגע קריאה בספר תהילים קטן, נושק לספר, ונושק לבנו.

Dov's father did not seem as concerned as the mother was. He hardly broke from his routine. He closed the Psalms that he was reciting, kissed the book, and then kissed his son. The narrator hints that the two kisses were similar. This was not the typical behavior of a worried parent before his son goes off to battle. Perhaps this was meant to describe the relaxed atmosphere felt in Israel at the time. War was nowhere in sight.

²⁰⁰ Sabato, Haim. *Tium Kavannot [Adjusting Sights]*. Tel Aviv: Yediot Aharonot, 1999. P. 12

On their way out, the boys stopped at the synagogue of a local hasiddic sect. The rabbi and his followers were reciting a prayer over the new moon. The two soldiers were urged to approach the rabbi for a blessing of protection. The rabbi recited a verse, asking God to plant courage in their hearts. "Let fear fall upon thy enemies", he prayed. These words stayed with the narrator for the next three days. They became a source of strength when he was confronted with the most dangerous situations. Whenever fear crept in, the image of the rabbi appeared before him and soothed his worry.

In this scene, the narrator is alluding to a Midrashic source discussed previously in this research. In the Book of Genesis, Joseph was sold by his brothers as a slave. He served in the home of Potiphar. Potiphar's wife set eyes on him and tried to gain his affection. One day, when the two were alone, she tried to seduce him. Joseph fled from the house, leaving his clothes in her hands. The Rabbis explain that Joseph was spared temptation because he saw the image of his father, Jacob, in the window. The fatherly image spared him from sin.

In this work, Haim was also inspired by the fatherly image of the rabbi. The image was used by the soldier as a source of inner strength. By Joseph, the fatherly image gave him the inner strength to stand up against temptation. By Haim, the fatherly image gave him the courage to proceed in battle.

According to the tradition, there is a belief that one who recites the prayer on the new moon will be spared from harm for the coming month. Haim and Dov recited the prayer before their departure. After Dov fell in battle, Haim was left to wonder about the prayer and its protection. He also wondered about the blessing of protection they received from the saintly rabbi.

This reflective moment was a turning point in Haim's life. It could be compared to the developmental stage, when the child realizes that his own father is not invincible. From the earliest age, the child perceives the father figure as a symbol of strength. As the child matures, he slowly notices that the

father is a mere human being with faults and weaknesses like everyone else. He must learn to accept the father, with all of his faults, and dismiss the mistaken image that he once perceived. In Haim's innocent eyes, the hassidic rabbi was the image of perfection. If the rabbi prayed for their wellbeing, their safety should have been guaranteed.

עד ששמעתי : דוב נפל. מאותה שעה לא נראתה לי עוד דמותו של הזקן.²⁰¹

During the three days of intense fighting, the image of the rabbi appeared to Haim. When he heard that his friend Dov was killed, the image ceased. Haim's world went into complete upheaval. His belief structures were shaken to the core. The rabbi's prayer could not offer protection. The prayer on the new moon proved powerless. Perhaps he was also at risk. This was a difficult moment for Haim, who was raised in an environment of absolute faith and trust.

Months later, as he began to get perspective on what transpired, Haim felt compelled to visit the rabbi. Like a son, he wished to share with the rabbi all that had happened to him. However, he did not want to cause the rabbi pain with the tragic news about Dov. When he finally mustered the courage to pay the visit, it was too late. The rabbi had died two hours before he arrived.

13.2 Chapter Two

Haim was granted a twenty four hour furlough. The commander Hanan was sympathetic to the soldier's feelings, knowing what they went through in combat. He acted in a fatherly manner towards his weary soldiers.

חנן פתח את דלת הג'יפ בתנועת יד רחבה, עזר לי להעמיס את התרמיל על כתפי,
ונפרד ממני כמו אב מבנו, טופח על השכם ואומר בחיוך ביישני : חופשה נעימה.²⁰²

²⁰¹ Sabato. Tium, P. 13

²⁰² Sabato. Tium, P. 18

The narrator uses the analogy of a father and son when describing the kind behavior of the officer towards his soldiers. The father is the symbol of compassion and concern for the wellbeing of the son. In this scene, the pat on the back was referred to as a fatherly gesture.

The narrative frequently jumps from past to present. The first thought of home brought a barrage of images from the past, including his long friendship with Dov. The thoughts then turned to the family.

בערב שבת הייתי עם אבא בבית הכנסת שלו בקהיר "אהבה ואחוה". לאן שהלך, הלך בית הכנסת שלו איתו, גם למעברה באזבסטונים. ובשבת, בכל שבת, הייתי עם סבא בחלב עם הדרשות והמעשים והבקשות והפזמונים של חכם עטייה ושל חכם עבודי. עולמות הרבה מילאו אותם ימים את נפשי, בכלום שמחת.²⁰³

The narrator's father is described as a man with a synagogue. Wherever he went, his synagogue went with him, even to the pathetic asbestos dwellings of Bet Mazmil. In all of the author's works, the father is portrayed as a tired, hard-working immigrant laborer. The father did not have much spare time to be with the family. After long hours at work, the father found comfort from his woes in the synagogue which he maintained. Back in Cairo, the father was the גבאי, or beadle of the synagogue.²⁰⁴ When the community was uprooted, he continued to run the synagogue in his new surroundings. In this scene, the narrator envisioned his father running the synagogue in Cairo. This was a positive period in his father's life. Beholding this image gave the weary soldier a respite from his emotional state.

As discussed earlier in this research, the grandfather played a significant role in the narrator's upbringing. Due to the father's long hours at work, the grandfather filled the void as an additional father figure. Rabbi Shwekey, the narrator's maternal grandfather, was the head rabbi of the Talmudic Academy in Cairo. Rabbi Shwekey was born in Halab (Aleppo), Syria. He stemmed from a long line of rabbis and communal leaders. He was a revered

²⁰³ Sabato. Tium, P. 19

²⁰⁴ The author elaborates on this role of his father in Boi HaRuach.

leader and masterful orator. In Cairo, Rabbi Shwekey delivered the weekly sermon to the entire community. The move to Israel left the grandfather without a congregation. Surrounded by mostly ignorant Jews, the scholarly grandfather never felt at home in his new surroundings. His heart longed for Halab.

The father and the grandfather were strong role models for the narrator. The father worked long hours to provide support for the family. His communal involvement was a priority and a passion. The grandfather was a brilliant scholar and teacher. These positive male examples had great influence on the narrator, helping him to navigate through troubled times.

As a literary style, in order to highlight the inner turbulence of the narrator after the battle, the story jumps back and forth in time. As the soldier made his way home, flashbacks of different periods of his life flood his mind.

The Sabato family was setting foot for the first time in Israel. The father was completely mesmerized by everything he saw. The mother, on the other hand, was more concerned for the children's wellbeing. The mother's eyes filled with tears.

אבא מרגיע אותה בפסוקים בשבח ארץ-ישראל. בנמל ראה אבא חייל של חיל הים
במדים מבהיקים ובסמלים מצוחצחים. נרגש כולו, הצביע אבא בגאווה ואמר לנו:
הנה חייל, חייל של ארץ ישראל. השלום לך חייל! החייל הביט בו בתמהון והמשיך
בדרכו. אבא קרא לעומתו, הצלח מעשיך, חייל. השם עמך, גיבור חייל!²⁰⁵

This incident shows the excitement in the father's heart on his arrival in Israel. Upon seeing the Israeli soldier, the father filled with pride. The father had never seen a Jewish soldier in uniform. His enthusiasm was genuine. To calm the mother's nerves, he espoused verses praising the Promised Land. She was not convinced by his romantic outlook of their new surroundings. She needed food to feed her children.

²⁰⁵ Sabato. Tium, P. 21

It is interesting to note the differing response of the parents. The family had just stepped off the boat in Haifa. The father viewed everything with rosy eyes, and became overwhelmed with excitement. Everything he ever prayed for was coming true. Nothing could lessen his enthusiasm. On the other hand, the mother was worried about how they were going to survive. They had no home, no furnishings, and little money to live on. In this new situation, the mother felt insecure, not knowing where the family would live, and how they would support themselves. The wellbeing of the children was her primary concern. She couldn't enjoy the moment. She was so filled with emotion and worry that all she could do was cry. At the same time, the father experienced an epiphany. For him, arriving in Israel was a spiritual climax, a dream come true. The issues of maintenance and survival could wait. The father was overjoyed, present in the moment, pointing out to the children all of the wondrous things that he saw. He began to wax philosophic about the special qualities of the Land of Israel. For him this was a teaching moment, not a practical one. He was not concerned with the worries of the future.

In this scene, the father is portrayed as the idealistic visionary. He displayed the ability to rise above the events at hand and experience life on a spiritual plane. This incident was significant in the narrator's development as a young boy. It provided for him a concrete example of how to positively cope with challenges in life. The father provided for the son a sense of confidence and security that, even in the most challenging life situations, one must look for the good.

The family was sent to a temporary absorption center in Tiberius. The mother became more distraught. She wished to join her relatives in Jerusalem. The father continued to see the bright side in every turn.

אבא אמר שהמקום טוב. ועוד אמר, שבגמרא כתוב שטבריה טובה ראייתה, ושבאר של מרים משוקעת בכנרת...וגם אמרו לו בסוכנות, שאם יאסוף בטבריה עשרה ילדים, יהיה מורה ותהיה לו עבודה. במצרים היה סוחר, גם זו לטובה. אבל אמא

אמרה שלא תישאר כאן לילה אחד. כמדומה אני שראיתי דמעה נושרת מזווית עינה.²⁰⁶

The father was trying to make the best of the situation. He continued to quote Biblical verses, hoping to ease the mother's frustration. In an attempt to speak in more practical terms, he told the mother that he could find work in this town. Even though he was a merchant in Egypt, he was willing to become a teacher to provide for the family. The father understood the complexity of the situation. The family would need to be supported and he was willing to do everything in his power to make their new lives in Israel viable. He was a model of optimism and strength. The numerous unknowns of the situation did not undermine his confidence. Despite all of the attempts to persuade, the mother would not change her mind. The family would need to move to Jerusalem.

In this period of time, the roles of the father and the mother were clearly divided. The father was the breadwinner and spent most of the time out of the home making a living. For the man, it was less daunting to deal with new surroundings. The mother dealt with all of the domestic duties and tended to the needs of the children. For her, the most important factor was a stable home life and a reasonable support system. If she could not secure a comfortable home, the mother preferred to be surrounded by close relatives. This familiarity would soothe the tension and anxiety that she suffered in their move. The extended family was very close and supportive, and the notion of the father to set up their home away from the others was inconceivable.

The chapter concludes with the visit of an old man bearing gifts of fruit and wine for the new immigrant family. The man's knowledge of scripture was inspiring to the father. The father was so happy to meet someone with similar ideologies to his own. To him this was another sign that Tiberius was a reasonable place for the family.

²⁰⁶ Sabato. Tium, P. 22

אבא שמח. אמר לאמא: ראית? אנשי ארץ ישראל אנשים של צורה הם, בקיאים במקרא ומסבירים פנים לאורחים. טובה היא הארץ וטובה היא טבריה. אדמת קודש. אבל אמא לא נרגעה. כל הלילה לא עצמה עין. כתבה מכתבים לכל קרוביה. לא מבינה מה קרה למברק ממילאנו.

למחרת הגיעה מונית לפתח הצריף. כולם היו שם: נינו, וזכי, וחכם בנימין. קומו! אתם באים איתנו לירושלים. עכשיו. לא הועילו לאבא טענות ומענות, ונסענו.²⁰⁷

In this incident the father clearly expressed his desire to remain in Tiberius, while the mother wished to settle in Jerusalem. In the end, the mother's relatives arrived on the scene and, without further delay, the family was on their way to their new destination. No additional comment was heard from the father. This must have been disappointing for him, yet he understood how important it was for the mother to be close to family. Shalom Bayit prevailed over everything.

In the volume *Boi Haruach*, the narrator describes the overall demeanor of the father during his childhood. Throughout the story he appears exhausted, overworked, bitter, and unhappy with his lot. His involvement in managing the synagogue was his only relief, as he nostalgically imagined himself in the synagogue back in Cairo. The narrator describes the frustration that the father sustained. The few incidents shared in this work about his father show a completely different person: radiant, ambitious, positive, and enthusiastic. In the family's early years in Israel, both the father and the narrator would sustain many hardships as a result of their moving to Bet Mazmil. The narrator leaves the reader to wonder what would have happened had the family remained in Tiberius.

The narrator continued to reminisce about his childhood in Bet Mazmil. His cousins helped him gain the protection of the local gang leaders. Momo was one of the more daunting characters. When the narrator first met him, he had already been expelled from school for acts of violence. Yet, the narrator learned that there was a different side to this neighborhood ruffian. When the

²⁰⁷ Sabato. *Tium*, P. 24

narrator explained to Momo that he must stop playing to pray the afternoon prayers, Momo shared with him that he was also versed in the prayers.

לך, לך להתפלל. גם אני יודע להתפלל, וגם אבא שלי חזן וגם פייטן, וגם היה לו בית
כנסת בחוץ לארץ. וכמי שמנסה להוכיח את דבריו התחיל תכף לסלסל במתיקות.²⁰⁸

Momo's father was a cantor in his previous life in Morocco. He was a revered member of his community. Like many of the new immigrants to Israel, Momo's father was not able to find reasonable employment. Nobody was paid to lead the services in the poor Israel society. The fact that Momo was a tough gang leader may have been the result of the father's inability to cope with his new life and his loss of self-esteem. Many immigrant children at the time were left with little parental guidance and support, and many fell into anti-social behavior.²⁰⁹

Despite this fact, Momo received from his father a love of the prayers. He knew many of them by heart and displayed the ability to chant them. This was a surprise for the young Haim. Momo's father was successful in imparting certain aspects of the tradition to his son.

The second chapter concludes with Haim's anticipation to spend the few remaining hours of his furlough at home. The family would all be waiting. Even the grandfather would be there. The mother later told Haim that the grandfather had not stopped praying for his safe return since he left. This deep concern for the son's safety, and vigilant recitation of prayers is typical of the traditional father figure. No reference is made regarding the narrator's father.

13.3 Chapter Three

No significant references to fathering are mentioned.

²⁰⁸ Sabato. Tium, P. 28

²⁰⁹ This may be considered an exception that proves the rule. Despite the father's presence in the home, the son developed anti-social behavior.

13.4 Chapter Four

Haim arrived at home. The parents were both apprehensive and quiet. They were trying to hold back their tears. The mother welcomed him in the way she would every day after school. Haim walked over to his father to kiss his hand.

ניגשתי לנשק ידיו של אבא. כמה גאה היה בי ביום שהתגייסתי, וכמה גאה היה בי ביום שחזרתי מן הטירונות לחופשה הראשונה עם המדים שכתוב עליהם : צה"ל. מי חשב אז על מלחמה. אבא ישב מאופק בפנים מתוחות. יודע הייתי לכמה כוח נזקק הוא כדי שייראה שליו, ויודע הייתי ששפתיו לוחשות מזמורים של תהילים, כמעט ויכולתי לנחש אותם.²¹⁰

This scene is charged with emotion. Parents invest many years to raise their son in the best way possible. They provide the needed food and protection. They try to buffer him from some of life's harsh realities. Sending a child to war runs contrary to the parental instinct.

Haim's father was so proud of his son the Israeli soldier. For him it was the fulfillment of a dream. The enthusiasm stemmed from the father's religious Zionist beliefs. The Jewish people were reestablishing themselves after two thousand years of exile, and his son was playing an active part in the process. This idealistic outlook lasted until the war broke out.

Nobody expected a war like this one. The father was shaken to the core, terrified over what may happen. He mustered strength to present a calm face. Haim understood what his father was going through. He could even predict exactly which sections of the Psalms his father was reciting at that very moment.

Instinctively, the father understood that he must remain strong for the son. The father is meant to provide and protect, not break down and cry. The son looks to the father for strength. After a few awkward moments of silence,

²¹⁰ Sabato. Tium, P. 44

Haim let out a barrage of stories of what took place in the war. He allowed himself to feel like a child again, hoping to find solace in the parent's presence.

The grandfather soon joined them. His eyes were filled with warmth and understanding. Haim felt so grateful to be home.

רגשות של אהבה מילאו אותי. רציתי לקום ולחבק כל אחד. כולם היו קרובים לי
קירבה חדשה. אהבה חדשה הרגשתי. אהבה שלא הכרתי קודם מעולם.²¹¹

Even as the child matures, he craves the warm embrace of the parent. After experiencing such a life threatening event, Haim almost felt reborn. Reunited with his parents and grandfather he was overcome with the emotions of love and appreciation, a sense of love that he never before felt.

As the room filled with friends, curious to hear what happened in the war, Haim shared everything he could remember. His mouth spoke, yet his heart and mind drifted to another place. His mother tried to feed him tea and biscuits, while his father sat watching with tears in his eyes. These tears waited for weeks to come out. He had held himself together, praying silently for his son to return alive. The tears of worry were now mixed with tears of gratitude.

It may not be natural, but this show of emotion by the father is important for the son. Haim saw how much his father truly loved and cared about him, perhaps one of the most important sensations a father can give to his child.

13.5 Chapters Five, Six, and Seven

These chapters do not have references to fathering behavior.

13.6 Chapter Eight

²¹¹ Sabato. Tium, P. 46

This chapter contains the last significant mention of the father for the remainder of the work.

The narrator recounts events from the war. In the heat of battle, the narrator returned to his tank to retrieve supplies and ammunition. He reached down to take his personal belongings and found his Tefillin. This inspired a flashback to the day of his Bar Mitzvah when he donned the Tefillin for the first time.

ביום שנעשיתי בר מצוה הנחתי אותן לראשונה. במניין נץ החמה של הפועלים יוצאי בגד בבית כנסת הרמב"ם, בשיכון עולים בית מזמיל...כולם עמדו סביבי: אבא, והדוד נינו, והדוד גא'קו, והדוד זא'ק, וחכם בנימין, מדריכים אותי איך להדק את הבית על הזרוע, וכיצד לכרוך את הרצועה על היד, ואיך לעשות צורת שי"ן, ולקשור על האצבע שלוש טבעות...רעדה אחזה בי. קשרתי את התפילין באהבה כזו ובהתרגשות כזו שכמעט עצרתי את הדם, וסימני הרצועה על ידי השמאלית עוד ניכרו בי ימים רבים. אותה שעה הנשים בעזרה זרקו סוכריות וכולם קראו מזל טוב.²¹²

In this scene, the narrator entered manhood in the traditional Jewish way. His father provided for him the Tefillin that he would put on each day for the rest of his life. The Torah ceremony took place at the early prayer service, at the crack of dawn. The father instructed the son not only in the mechanics of prayer, but also in the correct approach to praying.

The donning of the Tefillin is often a difficult task for a young boy. There are many details that must be followed to perform this commandment properly. The father is responsible to show the son how to bind the Tefillin in the custom that was passed down in his family.

The Bar Mitzvah ceremony is a significant moment in a boy's life. From that day, the boy becomes a part of the community, his first step towards manhood. The father plays a significant role in this transition. In this story, the father performed the basic tasks needed to commemorate the event. The humble celebration left its mark on the young boy. He would continue to pray

²¹² Sabato. Tium, P. 101

and put on the Tefillin every day for the remainder of his life. This is the true test of the father's success in transmitting the tradition to his son.

13.7 Chapters Nine, Ten, Eleven, and Twelve

The remainder of this work deals with the series of events that took place at the beginning of the Yom Kippur War. The author participated in an army inquiry and shared his recollections of the battle. He hoped that as the facts came clear he would discover what happened to his friend Dov. His wish never came true.

13.8 Summary and Conclusions

This work describes the challenges of a young soldier as he returns from war and tries to make sense out of what he experienced. The loss of his childhood friend caused his entire life to turn upside down. He was forced to clarify his beliefs and loyalties to his country, his family, and his traditions. The story is a search for answers on many levels. Many significant questions are posed, yet good answers are not always found. That is one of the messages of the story. Life is not clean and neat, and often perplexing strings remain loose. The facts about Dov's death would never be discovered. The Hassidic Rabbi would never come back to resolve the soldier's questions of faith.

The theme of fatherhood is not extensively dealt with in this work. The Jewish life cycle and family life are not central to the plot.

In this work, the father figure is perceived as a symbol of strength and a source of inspiration. The father prays for the wellbeing and success of his son. Seeing the son as an extension of himself, a father naturally takes pride in the son's achievements. The encouraging pat on the back, even when administered by someone else, is referred to as a fatherly gesture. In times of distress, the image of the fatherly figure has the potential to bolster confidence and courage in the son.

In the Jewish context, the father is responsible for the teaching and training of the many customs and practices. The father is a link in a particular brand (sect, lineage, or nusach) of the tradition, and it is imperative that he preserve this brand by transmitting it to his children, especially the sons.²¹³ Although every Jewish male is to don the Tefillin from the age of thirteen, the father is responsible for teaching the son his family's method of tying. This aspect was mentioned in this work.

Two specific incidents in the story highlight the issue of continuity of the tradition. In the first example, Momo reveals to Haim his knowledge of the prayers. For this neighborhood ruffian, the ability to recite prayers by heart was out of character. Although the father could not control his child, he had succeeded in transmitting to him a love of the prayers. Since this was an area of passion for the father, it was something that the son took pride in learning. This was a true sign of respect for the father and his way of life. In this regard, the father served as a role model for the son. This affinity for the tradition, as passed down by the father, provides a strong anchor for the son as he matures. It is likely that the delinquent Momo would one day mend his ways and seek a deeper connection to the tradition as experienced in his home.

The second incident describes how Haim's father prepared him for his Bar Mitzvah celebration. The Tefillin ceremony is a key part of this life cycle event. The father was very careful to fulfill his responsibilities. When the uncles began to share their suggestions as to how to wrap the Tefillin, it appeared that the father was politely pushed aside. As far as the Halab tradition is concerned, there is no doubt that the relatives were versed in the same custom as the father. However, it seems unusual that the father would

²¹³ The Orthodox tradition holds that the religion of the child is based on the mother. A Jewish mother will produce Jewish children, despite the religion of the father. The customs of the child are based on the traditions of the father. In a marriage between Jews of Sephardic and Ashkenazi descent, the tradition holds that the children follow the customs and nusach of the father. This is based on the expression *מנהג אבותינו בידינו*, the customs of the father are in our hands. This concept is dealt with at length in this research.

be sidelined by the relatives in the training of the son. The obligation is first and foremost on the father.

Although the father was firm in his beliefs and passionate towards the tradition, he understood the importance of harmony in the home. Although his wish to remain in Tiberius was ignored, not another word was spoken on the subject. At Haim's Bar Mitzvah, when the relatives (most probably from the mother's side) assumed the fatherly task of wrapping the Tefillin on the boy, once again the father remained silent. This ability to compromise in emotionally charged situations shows strength of character. The father maintained his balance even in challenging situations. This was an important example for the son to follow.

It is clear that the father figures in this volume were highly stable and dependable individuals. They were available to their families and provided the needed physical and emotional support. The son's enlisting the image of the father as a source of strength and inspiration attests to the important role the father plays in the development of the son.

Section 14

Volume 3: K' Afapay Shachar

14.1 Book Details:

Title: כעפעפי שחר : מעשה בעזרא סימן טוב

Publisher: ידיעות אחרונות, ספרי חמד, ספרי עליית הגג, תל אביב, ישראל

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ISBN: 965-511-865-7

Paper Size: A5

Jacket: Soft bound

Front Cover: The background color of the front jacket is light blue. The cover displays a photo of a gateway made from Jerusalem stone,²¹⁴ with two decorative metal doors in the center. The doors are painted in sky-blue, adorned with flowers and Jewish stars. The flap contains a brief biography of the author and a list of his other works.

Back Cover: The back jacket contains a summary of the book and two recommendations by Israeli literary critics.

English Translation: "The Dawning of the Day: A Jerusalem Tale" (2006), Toby Press, CT. USA

14.2 Symbolism of the Cover

The color chosen has symbolic significance in Middle Eastern cultures. The light blue color is considered a good luck charm used to ward off the "evil eye". The stones are typical of Jerusalem buildings, hinting to the reader the

²¹⁴ Rough, light toned, rectangular stone tiles used to cover exterior walls of all Jerusalem buildings

location and setting of the story. The two metal doors are closed, perhaps to stir the reader's curiosity as to what lies behind them. The Jewish stars suggest that the story will have a Jewish theme.

14.3 Symbolism of the Title

The title *כעפעפי שחר* refers to the rays of light at dawn. The term is based on an expression from the Book of Job.

יְחַשְׁכוּ, כּוֹכְבֵי נֶשֶׁפּוּ יָקוּ-לְאֹר וְאֵין; וְאֵל-יִרְאֶה, בְּעֶפְעֵפֵי-שָׁחַר.²¹⁵

עֲטִישְׁתִּיו, תִּהְלֵ אֹר; וְעֵינָיו, בְּעֶפְעֵפֵי-שָׁחַר.²¹⁶

The first verse describes a situation of gloom and total darkness. "He cannot see, even as the morning rays begin to glow" [EL]. The second quote uses this term in a positive sense, "His eyes shine like the first rays of the morning" [EL].

The term *עפעף* literally means eyelid. The morning light is likened to the eyelids of man. In the way a person flutters his eyes as he wakes from his sleep, so too does the morning light flicker as it begins to shine. Also, in the same way the eyelashes reach over the eyelid, the rays of the morning light stretch out over the horizon. At the crack of dawn, the eyes begin to open. Objects are not yet discernible, focus has not yet returned. The faint light is enough to understand that the night has past, a new day has begun, and life starts anew.

The verses from Job are relevant to many aspects of this work. The story of Ezra Siman Tov is a story about darkness and light. Ezra was blind to what was happening to his daughter. When she disappeared, his entire life turned dark. Ezra's childhood friend, Rachamim, lost his sight in an explosion. As Ezra grew older, the simple life that he knew changed. The waves of progress threw a giant shadow over his career and home. To others, Ezra was a source of light and hope. Miraculously, his blind friend was healed and his sight

²¹⁵ Job 3:9

²¹⁶ Job 41:10

returned. Ezra began to view life in a new light. In the final scene, at the crack of dawn, the missing daughter appeared.

The name of the main character, Ezra Siman Tov, is also indicative of the aura of positivism and light that he represented. The word Ezra has the root ע-ז-ר, which means to help. Ezra's entire life was about helping others. Even at personal expense or discomfort, Ezra never refused a request to help. The stories that he told were always filled with positive, encouraging messages. He never said a harsh word to anyone. Although he sustained much frustration and suffering in his personal life, towards those around him he was always Siman Tov, a good omen. His name is suited to the nature of his character.

מעשה בעזרא סימן טוב. The word מעשה also holds meaning in religious text. The simple translation of the title is: *A tale of Ezra Siman Tov*. However, in the Mishnah, the word מעשה connotes the introduction of a rabbinic anecdote used to prove a particular law.²¹⁷ If the Mishnah discusses a behavior of a rabbi after the term מעשה, that behavior was considered a precedent and was accepted as law. Perhaps Sabato is suggesting that the מעשה of Ezra Siman Tov also serves as a precedent for others to follow in his example.

14.4 Synopsis

כעפעפי שחר is a story about Ezra Siman Tov. This story is a search for personal fulfillment and the pursuit of spiritual purity. Set in Jerusalem during the early years of statehood (1940–1960), Ezra's story reflects the turbulent era of transition to modern times.

Ezra was a dedicated husband and father. He worked for forty years pressing suits at the local dry cleaners. Every day he prayed in the same synagogue, bought vegetables in the same stalls in the open market, and attended the

²¹⁷ מעשה may be short for "מעשה רב", actions or behavior of the rabbi. See Mishnah Brachot 1:1. מעשה בבניו של רבן גמליאל. The Mishnah presents an anecdotal discussion between Rabban Gamliel and his sons as a proof of the desired practice. After the Mishnah presents three opinions of the law discussed, the מעשה is added to prove which one is preferred.

daily lesson of his rabbi. He was respected and loved by everyone that knew him. On the outside, Ezra lived a carefree, humble existence. On the inside, Ezra lived a life of pain and suffering.

The story centers on the art of storytelling. Ezra Siman Tov is a masterful story teller. The stories he shared were always positive, meaningful, and inspiring. Ezra's magical stories turned him into a magnet, attracting listeners from different backgrounds. Storytelling for Ezra was more than just a pastime. Ezra used his stories as a form of catharsis and self-fulfilling prophecy. Haunted by a dark secret from his past, Ezra hoped to resolve his troubles through the imaginary world of storytelling.

While sharing a story, Ezra was approached by a mysterious man. The man was a writer in search of new material for his next story. Ezra befriended the man, and hoped that he would be the one to help him. After sharing his secret, Ezra naively asked the man to write for him a happy ending to his personal saga. The writer refused, explaining to Ezra that only he can determine his own destiny.

Throughout the story Ezra is haunted by the tragic disappearance of his daughter. Ezra carried the burden of guilt, thinking that her disappearance was a Divine punishment for something he did in his youth. At Ezra's sixtieth birthday party, with the help of the writer and Rachamim, Ezra was made to realize that he was not the one who caused Rachamim's blindness. With this new understanding, Ezra changed his entire life. For the first time, instead of guilt, he felt proud for what he did in his youth. The cloud of Divine retribution had disappeared. Additionally, he no longer had to feel responsible for his daughter's disappearance.

Ezra Siman Tov was forced to confront a changing world. The local rabbi died and Ezra's cronies moved away. His workplace closed and his neighborhood was undergoing massive change. Ezra tried to dedicate his newly acquired

free time to Torah study, but he was unskilled. It wasn't long before he became depressed.

Once again, it was the mysterious writer that put him on the right course. He encouraged Ezra to write down his stories for posterity. Suddenly the sad, frustrated Ezra was filled with purpose and drive. He began to fill manuscript after manuscript with his tales of inspiration. His once foggy memory was jarred, and he was able to recall the tales he heard from his rabbi. Ezra was infused with a new perspective on life. While the world around him was undergoing rapid transformation, on the inside Ezra was reshaping and redefining his own identity.

It was the power of story-telling that brought Ezra Siman Tov through a long, dark night. For most of his life, Ezra had suppressed his true desires and dreams. Carrying guilt for a sin he did not commit, he had denied himself the pleasure of thinking about his lost daughter. In the early morning, in the misty valley beneath the city, Ezra had an epiphany. Relieved of his mistaken guilt, Ezra allowed himself to dream about his long lost daughter. From the haze below, the image of his daughter appeared. A voice was heard, "Daddy, forgive me. Daddy, forgive me".

Section 15

Depiction of Fatherhood in K' Afapay Shachar

15.1 Father as Role Model

The author Sabato writes extensively on the characteristics and behavior of the traditional Jewish men of his ancestral community. The rabbis and laymen of Halab, Syria maintained a high level of scholarship and ritual observance. These men were noted for their acts of kindness and concern for the community. Most of the heroes of Sabato's stories are men that fit these descriptions. Although set in Jerusalem, the story of Ezra Siman Tov resounds with the same characteristics of these men.

In the introduction, the narrator shares how he heard the story of Ezra Siman Tov. The narrator frequently visited his elderly relatives, seeking their wisdom, and wishing to hear legends of his ancestors. When visiting his great uncle, the narrator posed some deep questions about life. Instead of responding to the questions, his uncle chose to tell him the tale of Ezra Siman Tov. "Through this story", encouraged his great uncle, "all will come clear. It is good to tell the story of Ezra Siman Tov."²¹⁸ Thus, the character of Ezra Siman Tov may be considered an exemplary model of the traditional Jewish male.

The opening pages of the story describe the characteristics of an esteemed group of rabbis known as נקיי הדעת בירושלים,²¹⁹ the pure-minded men of Jerusalem. This expression comes from the Babylonian Talmud²²⁰ that deals with the laws of judges of the high court. Rabbis who were accepted into the Sanhedrin, or high court, had to display the highest level of scholarship and piety. Each judge had to know seventy languages. These wise sages were

²¹⁸ Sabato, Haim. *K' Afapay Shachar*. Tel Aviv: Yediot Aharonot, 2005. P. 7

²¹⁹ כעפעפי שחר Prologue

²²⁰ Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin 23A

meticulous about every detail of Jewish practice. The Talmud states that these men would not serve as signatory to a deed unless they personally knew the other witness, so as not to be involved in a false business deal. They also refused to sit on the bench if they were not familiar with the other judges.

The narrator elaborates further the many virtuous qualities found in this group. They were extremely humble. They maintained a very consistent routine of prayer, Torah study, and acts of kindness. Although they themselves were often poor, they would never agree to accept financial assistance to ease their burden. They were self-sufficient and hard-working in all aspects of their lives.

Although the expression נקיי הדעת בירושלים refers to an ancient group of men, it is sometimes applied when describing unusually pious sages in later generations.²²¹ The narrator's great uncle was accorded this title. According to this uncle, Ezra Siman Tov also deserved the rare distinction of נקיי הדעת בירושלים, despite the fact that he was not a rabbi.

15.2 Consistency and Stability

Ezra Siman Tov led a religious lifestyle in the full sense of the word. This demanded from him a tremendous amount of discipline and routine. Each behavior was calculated, timed with precision, and consistent. He held the same job all his life. He frequented the same synagogues daily. He shopped at the same stalls in the open market every day. Each week, Ezra went to attend to his blind friend Rachamim. Every Saturday night, Ezra and Madam Sarah would visit with her brother, Dr. Tawil.

The few incidents that Ezra did not remain on schedule became a cause of frustration and concern. When the Hassid asked Ezra to escort him to the forest to meditate, Ezra is torn between his desire to be helpful to others and

²²¹ For an example of נקיי הדעת בירושלים in contemporary Jerusalem see: Simcha Raz, *The Tzaddik in our Time: The Life of Rabbi Aryeh Levine* (Jerusalem: Feldheim Publishers, 1989).

the worry he may cause his wife. During a delivery, Ezra was asked to be the tenth man for afternoon prayers.²²² True to his nature, he gladly obliged. The prayers were recited with great fervor and the time grew longer. When finally completed, Ezra was then asked to join in the learning of the final passage of Talmud. The frustration inside him grew. It was not Ezra's habit to be late or change course. This was a real challenge for him. The attribute of consistent, patterned behavior in the father is clearly evident in the character of Ezra Siman Tov.

15.3 Father as Provider

The narrator describes the daily routine of Ezra Siman Tov. Ezra was the classic example of the traditional father and husband. His life was highly routine and predictable. After a short breakfast, served by his wife Madam Sarah, Ezra walked to work at the local dry cleaners, where he served as a garment presser for over forty years. Madam Sarah did not work, like most women during that time. She was responsible for maintaining the home, cooking the meals, and raising the children. Ezra was the sole provider for the family.

The work ethic of Ezra is described in great detail. He never viewed his menial work as a burden. The task of straightening the wrinkles from old suits became a spiritual endeavor for Ezra. He felt he was returning life to the tired cloth, like a parent giving a loving stroke to the cheek of his own child. From morning until late afternoon, Ezra stood pressing the suits, restoring their vigor.

After work, Ezra routinely walked through the open air markets of Jerusalem to bring home the daily bread.²²³ He loved to visit the local stands and the merchants knew him well. Ezra's walks through the market were somewhat

²²² A quorum of ten men is required to recite certain sections of communal prayers.

²²³ Sabato spares no ink in his colorful description of the visit to the Machane Yehuda market. Through the eyes of Ezra Siman Tov the reader is given a first-hand tour of each of the small corridors of the market, the colorful sights, smells, and sounds.

therapeutic. He went everyday whether he needed to or not. Ezra would fill his baskets with the day's specials, leaving behind smiles and warmth in the hearts of all who came in contact with him. This was the way Ezra provided for his family all the years. In this regard, he is portrayed as an exemplary husband and father.

15.4 Respect and Loyalty

Sabato's portrayal of the marital relationship in this story is completely in sync with the spirit of the tradition. Ezra Siman Tov and Madam Sarah are prime examples of mutual respect and loyalty. Ezra was careful in the way he spoke to Madam Sarah and was sensitive to her feelings. He treated her like royalty. The fact that she was referred to as Madam says much about the way she was regarded in the home.

Madam Sarah also displayed tremendous respect for Ezra. Each morning, she prepared Ezra his breakfast, consisting of the special foods he loved. As Ezra departed for work, she stood by the doorway, kissed the mezuzah, and said a prayer for her husband's success. On Shabbat, she would sit beside Ezra while he sang Shabbat songs, and listened attentively to his stories.

When their grandson turned four, the narrator describes how the two of them doted over the boy, escorting him all the way to the nursery school. Ezra and Madam Sarah held similar beliefs and goals. Each knew their part and fulfilled it to the fullest. The true spirit of partnership and harmony was felt between them.

Throughout the story, the dialogue between the couple appears formal and matter of fact. Although mutual respect was evident, there may have been gaps in communication between the couple. On numerous occasions, Ezra chose not to share his feelings or events that occurred in his life. Ezra's relationship with the anonymous writer was shrouded in secrecy. The unusual incident with the Hassid in the forest was also not shared.

As much as Madam Sarah displayed her loyalty and support for her husband, she was also careful to choose what to say and what not to say to him. When Ezra became despondent, she worked very hard behind the scenes to arrange appointments and activities for him. When the children approached her to discuss with Ezra the possibility of relocating, she had a deep understanding of his opposing views, and did everything in her powers so as not to cause him anger or frustration. In this case she may have displayed a cunning spirit, but she used this art to help her husband in every way possible.

15.5 Passivity versus Activity

Fathering involves guidance and direction of the children towards the values and behavior that are dear to the parents. Ezra Siman Tov set a strong example of the desired behavior, yet is met with resistance from his children to cooperate and participate. His gentle nature did not allow him to demand more from them. He remained silent, hoping one day they would become more enthusiastic about the rituals. This passivity was prevalent in many areas of his life.

Throughout the story, Ezra was drawn into situations, often against his will. His altruistic nature often put the other's needs before his own. Sometimes this put Ezra into uncomfortable situations. I will cite a few examples.

Ezra was invited by the Hassid to meditate with him in the forest. This behavior was completely foreign to Ezra, as it was not practiced by his sect. Yet, Ezra agreed to go. He could not say no to a person in need. Upon completing his meditative prayer, the Hassid invited Ezra to join him in a dance to celebrate his spiritual step forward. Despite Ezra's discomfort, he joined in.

Ezra never sought training or education towards a better career. His entry into the position at the dry cleaners was not planned, and his passive nature played a role in his staying in the same job for his entire life.

His brother in-law Dr. Tawil invited him to participate in an academic lecture about Jewish liturgy. Despite the fact that he would not enjoy or appreciate the lecture, out of deference to his brother in-law he attended. As expected, this experience was not satisfying for Ezra.

As a young boy, Ezra was taunted by his friends to retrieve a lost ball from a restricted area. Against his better judgment, he entered the area and a tragedy occurred. A bomb went off and his best friend was injured. Ezra did not accurately understand what happened, and took the blame upon himself. His tendency to remain passive prevented him from discovering the truth.

Ezra's daughter volunteered in a local hospital. She became acquainted with one of the non-Jewish male nurses. Ezra was warned several times about her volunteering in the hospital. He remained silent and did not try to persuade her. When she disappeared, he tried frantically to discover her whereabouts. Eventually he stopped looking. He passively accepted this tragedy as a form of Divine punishment.

After his place of work closed, the Avrech²²⁴ invited Ezra to join him as a study partner. Ezra's love for Torah study religious text was endless, and he agreed to learn with him. This activity proved disappointing. Ezra listened passively for the entire session, hardly understanding a word. At least he had the fortitude to do this only once.

As a father, Ezra suffered from the same issue. His children displayed quiet resistance to his requests. They knew that he would not hold his ground and force his will upon them. Although Ezra commanded the basic respect and love of his children, his parenting style may have been too passive. When the children ignored his requests to participate in certain rituals, he remained silent.

²²⁴ A term used to describe a married man who dedicated his life to religious scholarship.

In many religious circles it is not customary to celebrate birthdays. As Ezra turned sixty, his children decided to honor him with a party. Ezra felt torn between the dictates of the tradition and the wishes of his children. At first Ezra refused to have a celebration. He was afraid to draw attention from the evil eye. The children, however, insisted. They held their father in the highest regard and wished to commemorate the important milestone. Eventually Ezra gave in to their repeated requests. Ezra could not disappoint others, even at the expense of his own discomfort.

The ability of Ezra to maintain a consistent religious lifestyle held some influence on his children. Although they did not remain as passionate as he was for the rituals, he left them with a strong reverence and respect for the tradition. His sincerity and quiet perseverance set for them the right example. If not out of love for the tradition, they would remain committed out of love for their father, and most importantly they grew to be upright citizens and respected members of society.

15.6 Ezra's Transformation: Discovery of the Father Within

The 60th birthday party was a turning point in Ezra's life. The event was significant well beyond the imagination of those who prepared it. The mysterious writer made a surprise appearance, escorting Ezra's blind friend Rachamim to the party. Rachamim relayed to the guests the story of how he became blind. Ezra suddenly realized that he was not the one that caused Rachamim to lose his sight. He found himself released from guilt for a sin that he never committed. The implications of this change were far reaching. Ezra began to see his life in a different light. He then turned to the writer for support and direction, but the man refused to help. Ezra would need to charter his own course. He would need to take an active role in his destiny.

Ezra was pushed way beyond his comfort zone. He was confronted with radical change on all fronts. His rabbi and spiritual guide passed away, his

work place closed, and his neighborhood was rezoned for commercial construction. Everything familiar was gone. Even the sunrise from the window of the synagogue did not look the same. Ezra realized that the time had come for him to do something for himself. He was no longer satisfied to play the game according to everyone else's rules.

Rachamim received experimental treatment and regained his vision. With his new ability, he approached Ezra to learn Torah with him. At first Ezra declined, thinking that he was not capable. After the first session together, Ezra realized that he was not ignorant or slow. He was able to teach and inspire. The two friends spent many days learning together.

During this time Ezra began to write his stories for posterity. His entire demeanor changed. Ezra became so motivated that he began to study through the night. When the morning arrived, he decided to take a walk to get some fresh air. He realized that he was standing in the same valley where the Hassid had taken him to meditate. This time he had walked there on his own volition. Ezra had come full circle from being completely passive to taking charge of his destiny. All that was missing was for him to put this new attitude, this break from passivity, towards his children. This occurred in the final scene of the story.

As the dawn broke and the mist cleared, Ezra perceived a figure approaching in the distance. He heard a voice calling out to him, "Father, Father." Ezra was reunited with the image of his lost daughter. Gazing into her eyes, Ezra Siman Tov lost consciousness and drifted off in a state of bliss. Ezra recaptured his identity as the loving, caring father, and his mission was complete.

15.7 Traditions of the Father

The narrator shares in great detail the nuances of the tradition in the world of Ezra Siman Tov. Although set in recent times, these details are a mirror of

Jewish life in the almost forgotten Halab Jewish community. Ezra Siman Tov was meticulous in carrying out his father's traditions. To view Ezra's performance of the tradition, one gets an authentic glimpse of the behavior of his ancestors, dating back hundreds of years. With the performance of each ritual, with the chanting of each prayer, Ezra invoked the memory of his father and grandfather who sang the exact same words, in the same nusach (tune). When describing Ezra's observance of the Sabbath and holidays, the narrator quotes the adage *מנהג אבותינו בידינו*, the traditions of the fathers are in our hands.²²⁵ The rituals performed by Ezra were all in sync with the way they were performed by his father before him. "That is the tradition he received from his father Nissan Melamed Siman Tov, and his father from his father the wise Yaakov Baba Melamed Siman Tov Gurgy." [EL]²²⁶

Ezra Siman Tov did not live in the times of his grandfather or his father. Societal changes created a new culture in the family, and the impact of parental influence on the children was weakening. Ezra was the last generation of the obedient, old school approach. He did his utmost to teach his children the tradition, yet he sustained frustration and disappointment as his children refused to absorb and adopt his traditional lifestyle. Ezra raised his children exactly as his father raised him. Ezra went to great lengths to imitate his father in every facet of the tradition. Yet, the new generation was not susceptible to the old methods. This shift is consistent with the theme of transition that is prevalent throughout this and the other works of Sabato.

Ezra was not successful in transmitting the essence of *מנהג אבותינו בידינו* to his children. Ezra's children would become part of the generation that embraced modernity and loosened their hold on the tradition. His children did not invest the time to learn the tunes and watch his performance of the rituals, as he had done with his father. Ezra was aware of this difference, and felt disappointed in their lack of commitment. While living in the tightknit

²²⁵ See section 6 above for full explanation of this adage.

²²⁶ P. 12

communities of Halab, the handing down of the tradition passed smoothly from father to son. Once the community uprooted, the challenges of survival became more pressing. In addition, with the onset of modernity, the younger generation was more interested in the new ways and ideas.

This nostalgic sentiment is common in Sabato's works. There is a thread of longing for the past in many of his stories. Ezra Siman Tov is symbolic of the last generation trying desperately to hold on to the tradition as it was. World War 2, the upheaval of countless Jewish communities, and the tides of modernity were sweeping away the ancient customs of the ancestors. In this atmosphere of change, the role of the father would undergo transformation as well.

15.8 Teaching Torah

Ezra Siman Tov was surrounded by characters of scholarship, both academic and Talmudic. His wife Sarah was the daughter of an expert in Maimonides, and his brother-in-law, Dr. Tawil, was a professor for liturgical poetry at the Hebrew University. The Avrech, Rabbi Moshe David, spent his entire life trying to produce new insights in Talmudic research. Ezra surrounded himself with spiritual luminaries like Rabbi Pinto and Rabbi Kahanoff. The author uses the supporting characters to highlight the culture of scholarship, and to show the contrast between them and Ezra.

Ezra Siman Tov was a working man. He was not a rabbi or a scholar. Throughout his life, he revered the Talmudic scholars and wished he could learn like them. The narrator repeatedly describes Ezra's secret wish to be able to understand a section of Talmud. Although there is no description of his childhood, it appears that he was not availed a strong education in his youth.

This did not discourage Ezra from fulfilling the obligation of study set down in the Torah. Ezra was a daily participant in the lessons of Rabbi Pinto and Rabbi Kahanoff. He absorbed the moral teachings and the stories like a

sponge and included them in the endless repertoire of stories that he later shared with family and friends.

The high esteem he held for the rabbis and for scholarship added frustration to Ezra in regards to his own children. Ezra was not successful in engaging his children with the tradition as he would have liked. Despite the early religious schooling they most probably received, they were not interested to pursue a life of scholarship. Ezra remained hopeful that one day they would appreciate and study the Torah. This secret wish was expressed clearly in the incident where Madam Sarah and Ezra escort the grandson to the Talmud Torah for the first time. Ezra and Madam Sarah prayed that one day this boy would grow up to be a scholar.²²⁷ When the rabbi reported that this boy had potential to grow and be a scholar, their joy overflowed. It seemed that Ezra was trying to repair with his grandson what he wasn't successful to achieve with his own children.

The command to teach Torah to the children applies to the grandchildren as well. Ezra Siman Tov tried his utmost to instill in his grandson the love for the tradition.

15.9 Arranging Marriage

There are two references of marriage in the story of Ezra Siman Tov. The first one appears in chapter ten.²²⁸ Rabbi Kahanoff visited the Tawil home to arrange a match between Madam Sarah and Ezra Siman Tov. The father listened carefully to the description of Ezra's qualities. Madam Sarah's brother overheard the conversation and began to protest. The simple, unlearned Ezra was no match for his sister. The father scolded him for passing judgment so quickly, explaining that honesty and diligence are important qualities in a man. The father finalized the arrangement. This scene

²²⁷ Sabato. K' Afapay, P. 52

²²⁸ Sabato. K' Afapay, P. 70

is indicative of the attitude towards marriage up until that generation, and the active role of the father in making sure the children find suitable mates.

There is no reference as to the involvement of Ezra's father in the marital negotiation. It is not clear if the father was involved and simply not mentioned, or if the father was no longer living.

There is also no reference in the story as to the marriages of Ezra's own children. The text does not describe Ezra's involvement in arranging their matches.

The second reference to marriage is related to Ezra's daughter. As a young adult, one of Ezra's daughter's volunteered at a Christian hospital in Jerusalem. Ezra was warned that she may be vulnerable and should be told to stop. The risks of her getting involved with a man of a different religion were too great. Ezra dismissed their warnings, thinking that his daughter could be trusted to marry within the faith. Eventually, she became romantically involved with a male nurse, and ran away with him to France. Sabato refers to this incident numerous times in the story as the tragedy that rocked all of Jerusalem.

Was Ezra Siman Tov at fault? Was he lax in his religious duties as a Jewish father? In society at the time, as the authoritative father began to lose his control, the children began to develop more autonomy and independence. Ezra watched silently as his children slipped away from the traditional culture of the past generations. The father's word was no longer the last word. Ezra was not inclined to thrust his agenda or lifestyle upon them, as he understood that they would not accept through force. This new mode of behavior was bound to bring new dangers and risks. With all of his conviction and love for the tradition, Ezra was forced to watch while his own daughter broke away from the long chain of Jewish continuity. During this period of change, many fathers sustained similar outcomes with their children.

15.10 Swimming

There is no reference to teaching swimming to the children in the story of Ezra Siman Tov.

15.11 Teaching a Trade

Ezra Siman Tov was employed in the dry cleaners as the garment presser and delivery man. He did not own his own business to pass down to his children. His menial work was not attractive to his children, so he could not pass this skill down to them. It is not clear if Ezra took an active role in this area. There is no reference in the text.

The training of the son in a trade could be seen in the example of Dr. Tawil. Dr. Tawil received much of his training and sharp learning skills from his father. He idolized his scholarly father and wished he could be like him in learning and breadth of knowledge. It is likely that his father taught him how to be precise in his rendering of difficult ancient texts, a skill that served him well as a professor of ancient liturgy.

15.12 Unconditional Love For the Son

During the incident of the Hassid meditating in the forest, a description of the father is introduced. As the Hassid prayed, he referred to God as his Father, asserting that the father must forgive the son, as his love for the son is unconditional and everlasting.

Father, oh Father, I love you. Father, Father, I am missing you. Why have you distanced yourself from me, Oh Father, what grave sins I have done against you, I have moved away from you. Please forgive me. You are my Father. It is normal for a Father to forgive his children. Come Ezra, let's dance in honor of our Father in Heaven. Father, Father, always with joy.

[EL] ²²⁹

²²⁹ Sabato. K' Afapay, P. 57

This section highlights the Divine nature of fatherhood. The Hassid calls out to God numerous times by using the term father. The Jew stands in prayer before the Omnipotent God like a son standing before his father. This imbues him with a sense of warmth and security. If the father remains close, nothing bad can occur. The son understands that if the father is unhappy with his behavior, the father may distance himself temporarily, but he will never cut off the relationship entirely, as the son is part of his flesh and blood. This is the nature of the father-son relationship.

This section quotes a famous expression pertaining to the Heavenly Father concept, כרחם אב על בנים. This phrase is incorporated in the prayers in the context of seeking God's forgiveness. In the same way a father has unconditional love for his children and will not abandon them, despite their behavior, so too should God behave towards His children with love and kindness, even they disregard His will. The source of this phrase is a verse in the Psalms.

י לא כחטאינו, עשה לנו; ולא כעונותינו, גמל עלינו.
 יא כי כגבה שמים, על-הארץ-- גבר חסדו, על-יראי.
 יב כרחק מזרח, ממערב-- הרחיק ממנו, את-פושעינו.
 יג כרחם אב, על-בנים-- רחם י-ה-ה, על-יראי.
 יד כ-הוא, ידע יצרנו; וזכור, כי-עפר אנחנו²³⁰

The Psalm describes God's abundant kindness. He does for us way beyond what we deserve. He overlooks our transgressions and treats us kindly. He pushes our iniquities far away because he understands our nature as creatures of flesh and blood. He is merciful like a father towards his wayward children.

²³⁰ Psalms 103:10-14

This reference of God behaving like a loving, compassionate father is significant. The human father serves as the baseline for the comparison. The father, in his most natural state, is full of compassion and forgiveness for his son. That is one of the primary characteristics of this title. Through this comparison, God is being asked to behave like the compassionate father towards His children, "like a father's mercy upon his children."

The Rabbis continued this theme in the following passage:

ולא ירד טל לברכה, וניטל טעם פירות. תניא ר"ש בן אלעזר אומר טהרה בטלה טעם וריח מעשר ביטל שומן דגן רב הונא אשכח תומריתא דחינוניתא שקלה כרכה בסודריה אתא רבה בריה א"ל מורחיא ריחא דחינוניתא א"ל בני טהרה יש בדך יהבה ניהליה אדהכי אתא אבא בריה שקלה יהבה ניהליה א"ל בני שמחת את לבי והקהיתה את שיני היינו דאמרי אינשי רחמי דאבא אבני רחמי דבני אבני דהו ליה.²³¹

The dew has not descended for a blessing and the flavor has departed from the fruits. It has been taught: R. Simeon b. Eleazar Says: [The cessation of] purity has removed taste and fragrance [from fruits]; [the cessation of] tithes has removed the fatness of corn. R. Huna once found a juicy date which he took and wrapped in his mantle. His son, Rabbah, came and said to him, 'I smell the fragrance of a juicy date'. He said to him, "My son, there is purity in thee," and gave it to him. Meanwhile [Rabbah's] son, Abba, came; [Rabbah] took it and gave it to him. [R. Huna] said to [Rabbah], "My son, thou hast gladdened my heart and blunted my teeth." That is what the popular proverb says, "A father's love is for his children; the children's love is for their own children." [EL]

This Talmudic passage describes an interaction between a father and son. Rav Huna detected rare spiritual qualities in his son Rabbah. He attributed Rabbah's keen sense of smell to a level of spiritual purity. Since Rabbah could smell the hidden fruit, he deserved to receive it. This was not just an ordinary gift. It was a gesture of how much the father appreciated his son. Rabbah did not perceive the depth of the gift he received from his proud father. When

²³¹ Babylonian Talmud, Sotah 49A

Rabbah's son arrived, he passed the fruit on to him without hesitation. Rav Huna found this behavior difficult to comprehend. He so much wanted Rabbah to partake in the fruit. Rabbah made his father's heart glad, and at the same time set his teeth on edge. The concluding proverb explains: The love and understanding of the father is always there for the son, while the love of the children is focused on the next generation, and not on the father in return.

The Talmud proposes that there exists an asymmetrical relationship between the father and the son. The father has a stronger instinct of compassion and benevolence towards the son. The son may not notice or appreciate the father's kindness. Rabbah did not understand the depth of the gift his father gave him.

Ezra Siman Tov displayed tremendous patience and benevolence towards his own children. It was clear that their behavior was not in sync with his beliefs. He refrained from rebuking them as he did not want to alienate them and push them further away from the tradition. He continued to support and love them, and prayed that one day they would appreciate the beauty of the tradition. His love for his daughter never diminished, despite the pain that she caused him, כרחם אב על בנים, him.

15.13 Summary and Conclusions

This work highlights the massive changes that took place in society over the past century. Ezra Siman Tov was the symbol of the generation that witnessed the shift. Ezra's feet were firmly planted in the past. His every behavior was an authentic replica of those that came before him. Ezra worshipped his father and strived to emulate him in every facet of life. With great humility, he served as a vessel to accept the tradition as his father did before him. With the onset of modernity, Ezra would not be able to transmit the message to his children with the same ease. The eyes of the youth were looking forward,

ignoring the teachings of the elders before them. The slow-paced, simple life that Ezra represented would soon disappear.

Ezra Siman Tov did everything in his power to expose his children to the beauty of the tradition. His approach was to lead by example. He was careful not to confront his children when they did not participate. Since the story takes place during Ezra's later years, after the children were grown and married, the interactions between the father and the children are minimal. Many of the obligations cited in this research are performed during the period when the children are still residing at home. No information is shared regarding the life cycle events of his children.

Scholarship is a central value in the traditional Jewish culture. This value is emphasized throughout this work. Although uneducated himself, Ezra Siman Tov was surrounded by brilliant scholars who dedicated their lives to learning. He held the rabbis in the highest esteem. When Ezra was forced to retire, the only pastime that he could imagine was Torah study. Ezra's greatest frustration was that his children did not accept his way of life. Learning and scholarship would not remain a high priority for them.

Ezra, as a role model, is the prime example of consistent behavior. This stability is a major factor in creating a calm home environment. He worked at the same job for forty years to provide for his family's needs. He was a reliable and active member of the synagogue. Every Thursday night, he went to assist his friend Rachamim. This list of constants in Ezra's life added to the family's sense of security. When the father and mother are in sync and able to forge a harmonious partnership in the maintenance of the family, the ground is fertile for the children to blossom.

Throughout the story, Ezra is pained by the tragedy of his daughter and the blame that he took upon himself. Although he never allowed discussion of the matter in the home, he silently suffered all his life. The story emphasizes the abounding love of the father for his children, and the tension between the

natural paternal instincts and the dictates of the tradition. When continuity is threatened (i.e. intermarriage), a parent is posed with the dilemma of sacrificing his own child for the sake of the tradition.

Ezra created for himself an even more complex web of thought. For most of his life, he imagined that his daughter's intermarriage was a result of his own sinful act. This was a form of Divine retribution that he must quietly accept. He suppressed his feelings of love and longing for his beloved daughter as a form of self-punishment. He stopped actively searching for her and refused to mention her name. He did not allow himself to behave like a father out of deference to the will of God. On numerous occasions, Ezra sought resolution to his inner strife. As long as he held on to the previous mindset of guilt, there was no viable resolution.

When he learned of his innocence, it became clear to him that there no longer existed a link between his misconduct and her disappearance. The new perspective allowed Ezra to live again. The cloud lifted off his shoulders and Ezra began to activate his true potential. He discovered that he could learn, teach, and even write his stories for others to enjoy. At this stage, the gates of love for his long lost daughter flew open. He allowed all of the suppressed feelings to surface. He became the father *כרחם אב על בנים*, the father that must learn to accept and love his children in all situations. Even when they go against his will, they are still his children. Perhaps she was misled, or forced into a situation that she couldn't get out of. Who was he to judge her for what she did as a young woman? The time had come to reach out and accept her for who she was. Ezra opens his heart and his arms. The image of his beloved daughter appeared in the distance. Her words rang out, "Father, father. Pardon me, forgive me. I have returned!" Ezra fell into a deep trance hearing over and over, "Father, father, father." The circle was complete.

Section 16

Volume 4: Boi HaRuach

16.1 Book Details

Title: בואי הרוח

Publisher: ידיעות אחרונות, ספרי חמד, ספרי עליית הגג, תל אביב, ישראל

Series: פרוזה

Editor: יהודה מלצר

Copyright: 2007

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Paper Size: A5

Jacket: Soft bound

Front Cover: Olive green cover. The front jacket contains a photograph of a young teacher dancing with her students in a field. The teacher appears to be a veteran Israeli and the children are new immigrants. Photograph taken by Zoltan Kluger, 1949, reprinted with permission from the government news headquarters.

Back Cover: The back cover contains a quotation from the story, followed by a biography of the author and his other works.

English Translation: "From the Four Winds"

Translated to English by: Yaakov Dweck

Hardcover English Edition: The Toby Press, 1 edition (February 1, 2010) CT.
USA

ISBN-13-978-159262403

Product Dimensions: 0.7 x 5.5 x 8.4 inches

16.2 Symbolism of Title

The title of this volume comes from a Biblical verse in the book of Ezekiel.

וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלַי, הִנְבֵּא אֶל-הַרוּחַ; הִנְבֵּא בֶן-אָדָם וְאָמַרְתָּ אֶל-הַרוּחַ, כֹּה-אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה,
מֵאַרְבַּע רוּחוֹת בָּאֵי הַרוּחַ, וּפָחִי בַהַרוּגִים הָאֵלֶּה, וַיְחִיּוּ.²³²

Then said he unto me, Prophesy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man,
and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Come from the four
winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.²³³

This verse is part of a prophecy regarding the future redemption of the Jewish people in Messianic times. In the beginning of the chapter, the prophet Ezekiel sees the image of a valley strewn with dry bones. These bones were to represent the demise of the Jewish nation. The bones were lifeless and in complete disarray. As the prophecy continues, the bones begin to join together, forming human skeletons. As flesh appears on the dry bones, the human shape is recognized. God sends a wind from the four directions, and the resurrection of the dead is complete.

Sabato entitled this work *בוֹאֵי הַרוּחַ* as it describes the miraculous revival of the Jewish people after the holocaust. Six million Jews were killed by the Nazis in World War Two. The Jewish nation was at the lowest point of its long history. Only three years later, from the smoldering ashes of Europe, rose an independent Jewish State. The gates were opened to the multitudes of Jewish

²³² Ezekiel 37:9

²³³ King James Bible

immigrants seeking asylum. Ashkenazi Jews from Eastern Europe joined the North African and Middle Eastern Sephardic Jews in reestablishing the Jewish homeland. The title בואי הרוח is a prayer beseeching God to send His holy spirit upon the returning exiles. The physical return has already begun. Now it is God's turn to bring the spiritual redemption to his nation Israel.

It is interesting to note that the Hebrew title בואי הרוח (Come O' Spirit) was translated in the English version as "From the Four Winds". The two titles are not identical, but related. They are both part of the same verse in Ezekial, "From the four winds come, O' Spirit..." The English title, From the Four Winds, emphasizes the incoming of the masses from the four corners of the world, while the Hebrew title, בואי הרוח, hints more to the final spiritual stage of the redemption after the physical return is complete.

Levin (2008) ²³⁴ explains the title בואי הרוח in terms of the inner force and drive of man. Levin asks what is this "wind" that builds man from within, and when does it appear? Every person has his moment when this wind of inspiration changes his life. Levin attempts to understand the nature and influence of this inner spiritual drive, as portrayed in this work of Sabato. This adds an additional dimension to the title בואי הרוח.

16.3 Brief Synopsis

The story centers on the narrator's (Sabato) experiences as a young immigrant in the early years of statehood. Through his relationship with Farkash, a veteran immigrant from Hungary, the narrator brings to light the tensions between the Sephardic and Ashkenazi Jews, and the challenges of the new immigrants in the developing country. The lives of Farkash and the narrator are so surprisingly intertwined, despite the age and cultural differences.

²³⁴ דינה לוין, "רוח האדם על פי 'בואי הרוח' של חיים סבתו", מעמקים: כתב עת וירטואלי לספרות ולאמנות, גליון 12 (ירושלים): דעת, כסלו-תשס"ח, 2008.

The story within the story, a common style used by Sabato in his works, describes the pained history of Farkash growing up in pre-war Hungary. As a young boy, Farkash was a Talmudic scholar. All his life he wished for his children to grow up loving and learning the Torah. The dream that Farkash harbored for his children was shared only with the narrator. Farkash secretly appointed the narrator as the executor of his spiritual will, hoping that one day, after his death, his children will understand the truth about his troubled life. Since the story spans a period of four generations, much insight regarding fatherhood can be gleaned from this work. Due to the complexity of the story and the variance of fathering types, the research will be presented in chronological order.

Section 17

Depiction of Fatherhood in Boi Haruach

17.1 Chapter 1

17.1.1 Father as Provider and Protector

The story opens with the narrator's (Sabato) attempts to navigate his new surroundings as a young immigrant to Israel. The first scene is filled with a sense of helplessness and frustration as the young boy fights for a space on a public bus. Even for an adult, this experience could be daunting. This scene raises many questions as to the presence, or lack of presence, of a parent in the child's daily experience. A lot was expected of the young boy at such a tender age.

Children were granted much freedom in the early years of statehood. This atmosphere may have been different from the one the narrator experienced growing up in Cairo. In their new life in Israel, the father had to leave early for work, and in the evening he would go to the synagogue. Children were expected to manage on their own, regardless of what the world threw at them. This is the tone of the story from the first page.

The Sabato family, like most of the new immigrant families, came with few worldly possessions. The young Haim arrived at school drenched from the morning rain, for lack of a proper coat. The kind headmaster tried to help by wrapping the boy's neck with the hand towel that the children wiped their hands on during recess. As the youngest child, Haim would be last in line to receive a hand-knitted scarf from his mother.

In this description there is an overall sense of vulnerability, frustration, and discomfort, many of the sensations one would prefer to spare from young children. This was not a normal situation, chosen by the parents. The move to

Israel was abruptly thrust upon the family, as they were forced to leave Cairo. The family lived on a meager budget and survival was the first priority. The children received little attention.

As provider, the narrator's father was successful in fulfilling this responsibility. The mother remained at home to perform all of the domestic duties and the father worked long hard hours outside the home. Since the father was a new immigrant, his command of the language was weak. He was only eligible for menial jobs, making supporting the family all that much harder.

In the opening pages, the narrator refers to the accent of his father as being different from the others in the neighborhood. While the children integrated more quickly into their new surroundings, the parents remained apart and different. Their accents were a constant reminder that they were foreigners. The narrator was sensitive to this difference between the world of the home and the world outside.

Due to the father's hard work and frequent absence, the narrator sought replacement father figures to fill the void. The first man he encountered was the kind teacher, Rabbi Loichter. The rabbi showed him much warmth and compassion, as seen by the gesture of the scarf and other interactions in the story. The narrator responded favorably to these gestures and developed a warm relationship with this father figure. Later on, the grandfather and Farkash would fill this void, providing the boy with a sense of security and confidence.²³⁵

The narrator enjoyed his time with Rabbi Loichter. This teacher was everyone's favorite. He understood the children's needs and would provide for them positive experiences beyond the scope of the regular curriculum. He taught the children about life and current events. He would take them for

²³⁵ It seems that where the father is not available to perform the job himself, the child will gravitate to other male figures. One has to hope that these surrogate male figures will be positive role models for the child.

hikes in nature and teach them to exercise. After allowing the children to view the proceedings of the Eichmann trial, he disclosed to the students his personal experiences in the Holocaust. He was the only survivor of his town. At that point the narrator understood the sadness that he felt in the teacher's eyes.

In general, the child perceives the father as the ultimate image of strength. Fathers don't cry. They are capable to stand up against any opposition. The child sees the father as a champion, not a loser. When the father displays weakness, when he shows that he is not all-powerful, this may undermine the illusion. For weeks, the narrator chose to ignore what he saw in the teacher's eyes. Only after the teacher shared his secret did this impression become reality.

התבוננתי בו והיה נדמה לי שחוט של עצב נסוך על עיניו השוחקות. רק אחרי שנתיים
הבנתי מה שהרגשתי.... ילד הייתי אז, עברתי את הגיהנום וחזרתי לעיירה. הילד
היחיד שחזר.²³⁶

The teacher was no longer the image of strength the boy so desperately needed. He was a troubled, broken spirit. This taste of reality for the innocent child was one of many that he would experience in this story. He may have to look elsewhere for a replacement father figure.

As the child grows, he becomes aware of the world around him. The parents serve as a source of information as to why things happen and how they work. As new immigrants, the narrator's parents were not capable to provide him with answers to his many curiosities. When the holiday of Purim came near, the narrator was filled with questions. No one was able to provide answers.

הסתכלתי סביבי וראיתי שכולם נרגשים ומחייכים ולא הבנתי למה. אותם ימים לא
נהגתי לשאול כל מילה שלא הבנתי. מה שלא הבנתי השלמתי מדמיוני, כשאני מנסה
להשוות מילה לא-מוכרת למילה אחרת שהכרתי מן התפילה או מן השפה הערבית,
או למה שליבי אמר לי....בדמיוני גילגלתי המילה העברית קאבוי וניסיתי לחשוב

²³⁶ Sabato, Haim. *Boi HaRuach*. Tel Aviv: Yediot Aharonot, 2008. P. 10

מאין באה. מובן שלא העזתי לשאול...מה זה "שלוף"? ומה זה שייך לפורים? כדרכי,
ניסיתי להבין מעצמי. חשבתני, איך יודעים הילדים בבית מזמיל את כל זה?²³⁷

The child felt so alone in his world, without the guidance and assistance of his parents. Their lack of involvement in his activities was not due to lack of love or concern. Practically, they had no time or headspace to deal with him, and even if he asked, they were not equipped to answer. This put the parents in a weak position, discouraging the child from seeking their counsel in the future.

The narrator discovers the meaning of the Hebrew word for "Cowboy". As the holiday of Purim approached, all the boys of the neighborhood dressed up as cowboys and Indians. The narrator asked his father to buy him a cowboy costume. During that week, the father worked overtime, leaving the house early and returning late at night. The narrator tried to discuss the matter with his father.

אבא, אמרתי, המנהל לויכטר אמר שכולם צריכים לבוא בעוד שבועיים לתלמוד
תורה מחופשים. הביט בי אבא ואמר, בוודאי, אם המנהל אמר, צריכים להתחפש,
ופנה בזריזות לבית הכנסת לקבלת שבת. ידעתי, במצרים עושים כל מה שאומר
המורה, כמו שחייל מציית לפקודה. מיהרתי אחריו, אבא, אני אהיה קאבוי. כן, כן,
ענה לי אבא בפנים רציניות, אתה תהיה קובוי. אתה תהיה קובוי. הוא ביטא את
המילה לא כמו הילדים בבית מזמיל.²³⁸

What courage the child had to muster to approach his father and make the request. What patience he displayed to wait an entire week until the opportunity arrived. The boy understood the family was struggling financially, yet the teacher made the request, and one could not refuse an order from the teacher. At least that was the attitude in Egypt. The father assured him he would have a cowboy costume before Purim.

The response of the father was cool and serious. There was no excitement in his voice, no indication that this was important to him. He was matter of fact

²³⁷ Sabato. Bui, Pp. 11-12

²³⁸ Sabato. Bui, P. 12

in his response, giving his word that the boy would be a cowboy for Purim. He did not tell him how or when it would all transpire.

The last phrase of the above quote reminds the reader of the language barrier between the father and society. The father did not know how to pronounce the word cowboy correctly. The author writes the word phonetically to emphasize the mistake in pronunciation. The repetition of the phrase, אתה קובוי, and the added sentence about the father's accent, contains a trace of sarcasm, indicating the narrator's frustration with the father's behavior.

Day after day, week after week, the young narrator waited impatiently. He was forced to watch as all of the other children wore their costumes and played their imaginary games. If his father promised, he knew that eventually it would happen. When the last day arrived, the father took the boy to buy the cowboy costume. He chose the cheapest hat made out of cardboard, with no accessories to match. The father displayed a moment of playfulness, pointing his finger like a gun, "Draw Cowboy!" This was a rare moment for the young boy. He admired his father for fulfilling his dream and appreciated the playful moment.

אבא בחר בכובע מנייר. לא היה איכפת לי. העיקר שאני קאבוי. הניח אבא את הכובע על ראשי ואמר: איזה יופי. איזו תחפושת, אתה קובוי. ממש קובוי אמיתי. וצחק מלוא פיו. טפח על שכמי, לחץ את ידי ואמר: שלוף. מזמן לא ראיתי אותו שמח ככה. כל כך שמחתי, לא חשבתי אותה שעה שאין לי יריעה על הכתפיים, ולא פסי קישוט על המכנסיים, וגם אין לי אקדח. לא היה איכפת לי בכלל. אני מחופש. מחופש לקאבוי.²³⁹

17.1.2 Interaction between Father and Son

This interaction between the narrator and his father was unique. The father did not play much with his children. He was too busy and overwhelmed with life. For one moment, the father showed his son his playful side. Seeing the joy in his father's eyes made the experience of buying the costume so much more meaningful. This was a rare moment in his childhood.

²³⁹ Sabato. Boi, P. 13

Feeling happier than ever, the young Haim went along to school in his new cowboy hat. On the way, the boy was caught in a downpour, and the cardboard hat turned into a clump of gray matter. Nothing could sour the boy's excitement. On that day, his father had made him the happiest person on Earth.

כל יום הייתי ממתין כשחזר מן העבודה ומצפה, אולי עכשיו יגיד משהו, ולא אמר.
לשאול לא העזתי...לא יכולתי להתאפק עוד ואמרתי, אבא, אני צריך להיות קאבוי.
בוודאי, עונה אבא, אתה תהיה קובוי. שתקתי ושמחתי.²⁴⁰

"I was silent and I was happy." This positive outlook could only come from an innocent child that loved his father very much. After repeated delays, the boy deserved to be angry with the way he was treated. How could he remain happy? Perhaps the culture in the narrator's home was one of trust. If the father said he would do something, there was no doubting that it would eventually happen.

This part of the story emphasizes the father's need to focus on essentials and not on frills. The father was the sole breadwinner, and was not available (physically or emotionally) to fill petty requests of the children. The mother was more accessible to the children and these small matters would normally be taken care of by her. The question could be raised as to why the narrator turned to the father to fill this request altogether? Did he even share this wish with his mother? If so, why didn't she take care of it herself? If she was handy enough to knit scarves, certainly she could easily have fixed for him a costume. Did the mother have to persuade the father to buy him the costume? Was the father reluctant to spend the money, or just too busy to deal with it? Perhaps the narrator was not privy to what transpired between the parents. He related the story as he experienced it from his young, innocent eyes, and leaves the commentary up to the reader.

²⁴⁰ Sabato. Boi, P. 12

The first chapter introduces the child and the cool manner with which he was treated by his surroundings. The setting is gray and cold. The narrative arouses pity, and at times anger over how he is treated. The father is lifeless. No details are shared regarding his looks, his eyes, or his presence. This lack of description is not typical to the author's style.

17.2 Chapter 2

In chapter two, a new fatherly hero arises: Farkash. The setting for his appearance is one of wild childish mischief. The children of the neighborhood played a nasty game. They would band together to taunt an old widow, hoping to see her screaming reaction. The wild children pelted her with pebbles and mud. When she erupted, the children gleefully ran away, only to reload and start all over again. This game went on until she reached home, or until someone shouted, "Farkash is coming."

עד שבא איש אחד נמרץ, פניו סמוקות ועיניו טובות. פרקש, קראו הילדים, עמדו
בצד, הטמינו את האבנים בכפות ידיהם והשפילו את עיניהם, תמיד היה פרקש מגיע
מאיזה מקום. הוא ניגש אל הזקנה, דיבר איתה רכות בשפה מתנגנת שלא הבנו
וליווה אותה לבית עם תריסי הפח המוגפים.²⁴¹

Farkash was the man who came out of nowhere, like Elijah the prophet, to save the old widow. The colors on his cheeks and the softness in his eyes were the first details that the narrator noticed. Farkash was filled with life and energy, always there in times of need, kind, warm and friendly. All of these traits were lacking in the boy's father. The contrast is striking. The narrator did not share details of the father's physical appearance. The previous chapter painted the image of a tired immigrant man, struggling to survive in his new surroundings. Farkash was also an immigrant. He spoke to the widow in Hungarian. However, he was a "Vatik", a veteran, having come to Israel a few years before. In the eyes of the young boy, Farkash was the needed image of strength.

²⁴¹ Sabato. Boi, P. 17

In the background of the scene, the narrator describes the elder people gathered at the bus stop. The people witnessed the mischief of the boys and sighed.

...נו, השתנו הדורות, כך נוהג היום העולם, מה אפשר לעשות, פעם הכל היה אחרת.
בארץ שממנה באנו היו הילדים מחונכים והודרים פני זקנים וזקנות.²⁴²

This phrase is an indictment against the culture and parenting style in the new country. The elders nostalgically reflected on their countries of origin, wondering what became of the values of decency and respect that they grew up with. These children were obviously not getting a proper education in their homes. Sabato often writes in a nostalgic tone, longing for times and places of the past.

Farkash was the only one who could control the unruly children. He didn't need to raise his voice. He simply stared at the children and immediately they fell into line. The narrator was amazed at the presence of this man. He felt that this is the way a father should behave, firm but loving. The narrator was still seeking a solid father figure to lean on. It seemed that Farkash appeared in his life at the right time.

As the two got acquainted, Farkash revealed that he also had a troubled past. He was together with Rabbi Loichter during the Holocaust. The narrator began to realize that he was surrounded by living fragments, who were trying to rebuild their lives in the best way they could. He was a child trying to make sense of a broken world, like a lost ship with nowhere to moor. The reader is exposed to the intense psychological damage and post trauma fragility of the Jewish people in the generation after the Holocaust.

Although much older, Farkash felt comfortable sharing his past with the young boy. He shared with him the tragic story of his father's demise after the First World War, and his own experiences in the Holocaust. From the start, the two characters forged a meaningful relationship. Farkash may have

²⁴² Sabato. Boi, P. 17

recognized unique qualities in the boy, and wished to befriend him to offer him support. After their first meeting, Farkash gave the narrator a word of encouragement. "We are all new immigrants here. You too will find your way in this new country. If there is anything you need, you can always call on Farkash. And who knows, one day, I may call on you as well." [EL]²⁴³ This comment foreshadows the rest of the story as their relationship grew and the boy proved worthy of this wish.

17.3 Chapter 3

Each day on his way to school, the narrator stopped to watch a bus driver prepare his bus for the day. The driver and his wife worked at the Beit Diskin orphanage. The narrator discovered that this orphanage cared for children whose parents perished in the Holocaust. Once again, the background of the story turned wet and cold, and the narrator was surrounded with adversity: Farkash's story about his father, orphaned children, random bits of information regarding the Holocaust, and the everyday challenges of Beit Mazmil. Each of these situations points to the difficulties of the children in the absence of a father figure.

The narrator was curious to know more about the Holocaust. He grew up in a time of total silence, when survivors felt embarrassed to share their plight in Europe,²⁴⁴ making it difficult to piece the picture together. The narrative abruptly jumps to a later discussion where the Sabato parents shared their personal experiences during the war. The mother shared her account of fleeing from Cairo to hide from the German army. The father described the emergency prayer service conducted as the Germans approached. Despite the

²⁴³ Sabato. *Boi*, P. 20

²⁴⁴ This pact of silence lasted until the Eichmann trial in 1961. Once people testified in public, the truth of what took place in the Holocaust was revealed and survivors began to share their personal stories.

lack of parental involvement he experienced as a boy, it is encouraging to see that the relationship with the parents remained close as he grew older.

The narrator describes the family's journey to Israel. The ship that they travelled on held Jewish refugees from many countries. The father could not understand the accent of the other passengers on board, even though they all prayed in Hebrew. Some of the people asked to split the groups so each could pray according to their custom and dialect. The narrator's father refused. He explained that they were all on a common mission going up to Jerusalem, and should act as brothers, despite their differences. In times of danger, it is important for Jews to display unity.

This revealing anecdote paints a completely different picture of the narrator's father. He was a man of lofty values and ideals. He was obviously a learned man as he seasoned his daily conversation with quotes from rabbinic sources. The fact that he was able to persuade the Egyptian Jewish refugees to pray together with the others says a lot about his personality. This anecdote provides a good example for the father as a role model. The father set a good example, encouraging tolerance and respect for the views of others. It has been stated in this research how proud the Halab Jews were of their nusach and how hard it was for them to compromise in this area. The father showed tremendous character in being able to blend and mix with the Hungarian Jews aboard the ship for the sake of a greater cause.

The narrator was five years old when the Jewish community fled from Egypt in 1956. The police had arrested the father under the pretense of pro-Zionist activity. Fortunately, he was released as the family boarded the ship. The mother escorted the family through customs. The border police stole every item of value that they could find. They even tore a silver necklace with a Jewish star off the narrator's neck. This star was given to each Jewish boy after their circumcision as a charm for good luck. This is a subtle reference that the father fulfilled his obligation to circumcise his son. It also points to

the vulnerability of the mother and children in the absence of the father figure.

The father was an active member of the Jewish community in Cairo. He served as *יבב*, or beadle of the synagogue. This was a voluntary position. Although his work as a merchant took up much of his time, he was always available to maintain the smooth running of the synagogue. It is clear that the father continued this type of communal involvement in Israel, as the narrator mentions how the father rushed to the synagogue each day after work.

When the refugees were handed fruit, the father began to chat with one of the Hungarian men. The Hungarian man asked to switch his apple for an orange, as they never saw oranges in Hungary, and the Egyptians rarely ate apples. The father replied that the man could have both. The father was truly a kind and generous soul. He was happy to share with others. Despite their concerns of survival, the father was able to share everything he had with perfect strangers. As life has its interesting turns, the father and the Hungarian man were sent to live as neighbors in Bet Mazmil. This life lesson was extremely valuable for an impressionable boy of five.

The chapter concludes with street names and their derivations. One of the streets near Bet Mazmil was named after Dr. Janus Korzak, a famous Polish doctor and educator who ran an orphanage prior to the war. Once again, the topics of orphans and the Holocaust are mentioned. The underlying search for the father figure continued.

17.4 Chapter 4

The tone in the story turns bright and cheerful. Purim has finally arrived and the narrator's father stayed home to celebrate. The traditional celebration of the holiday is described in full detail. The mother was in charge of preparing the food baskets given out as gifts to friends and family. The father took the family to the synagogue to hear the communal reading of the Biblical story of

Esther. The boy's father was shown in a different light in this chapter. When the neighborhood children knocked on the door, the father sang for them a liturgical rhyme for Purim, a tradition passed down from generation to generation.²⁴⁵ The narrator received his passion for the liturgical poems from his father and grandfather. The father succeeded in passing this aspect of the tradition to his children.

The mother sought a volunteer to deliver the special gift baskets to the neighbors and relatives. The narrator gladly volunteered. This type of training is critical in the passing of the tradition. Purim is a holiday where children are central to the festivities. The parents allow the children to participate in the fun, and positive memories are forged for the future.

One of his stops for the deliveries was the house of Farkash. When he arrived at the door, he was met by an old woman, who introduced herself as a matchmaker. She asked the young boy if he was interested in getting married. The young boy felt flustered and embarrassed. The woman took off her mask and it was Farkash himself.

This costume of matchmaker has much symbolism. Farkash was always trying to help others around him, to build up those whose spirits were broken. This choice of costume was totally in line with his innermost wish. There is no greater way to help a person in this world than to help him find a spouse. Especially after the tragedy of the Holocaust, the survivors felt an urgency to create families and bring more Jewish children into the world. In real life, Farkash arranged many marriages. This hints at the father's responsibility to assist the child to get married. Farkash behaved as a father to everyone he came in contact with.

Farkash proudly introduced the narrator to his wife and children. Then he took his children and the Haim on a mission. He too wanted to train his

²⁴⁵ The narrative includes all 22 stanzas of the poem, in typical Sabato style. The family was well versed in obscure liturgical poems.

children in the practice of handing out the holiday gift baskets. His recipients were mostly the lonely, broken Holocaust survivors. His wife protested Farkash's exposing the children to such embittered souls. Farkash believed that this was the most valuable education his children would ever receive. He was the one who brought light into the darkest corners.

House after house went Farkash and his team, laden with gifts and warmth. This was a completely different Purim experience for the narrator. He learned a lot about his neighborhood, and he learned even more about this special man and his quiet acts of kindness for those in need. Even the orphans at Beit Diskin were regular benefactors of Farkash's good heart, as he would bake for them every week, and distribute clothes on the holidays. As the fourth chapter comes to a close, the narrator reverts back to the theme of orphans.

17.5 Chapter 5

This chapter has no references to the behavior of the father.

17.6 Chapter 6

Chapter six discusses the play habits of the children in Beit Mazmil. The children learned quickly to spend most of their time outside. Straight after school, they would drop their school bags and run to the vacant lot at the end of the street. The tiny homes of the new immigrants were too cramped, and the mothers were busy tending to the crying babies and to their household chores. The mothers soothed their frustrated and weary husbands after a long, hard day of work in the sun.²⁴⁶ This short description reveals the hardship that the narrator's father suffered in his new life in Israel. The contrast to the father on Purim and the father in the rest of the story is clear.

²⁴⁶ Sabato. *Boi*, P. 48

The narrator's free time was devoid of adult supervision. The children spent most of their free time outside in large groups, playing the designated games of each season. A hierarchy of leadership formed. As in most groups, there were the leaders and the followers, those that everyone applauded and cheered for, and those that were ignored. The narrator was one of those ignored.

This type of environment was both helpful and harmful. For the stronger children, it gave them the opportunity to develop and hone their leadership skills. For the weaker ones, it meant sustaining insults day after day, until they were accepted by the group. The adults were seen as a nuisance to the children in Beit Mazmil. The children were happy to be left on their own, which sometimes left them in strange or even precarious predicaments.

In his efforts to be accepted, the narrator always seemed to be one step behind the rest. He was not coordinated nor handy, and usually watched as the other children spun their spinning tops and flew their makeshift kites. One day, while standing apart from the group to watch the fun, Farkash suddenly appeared. Farkash asked the boy why he was not flying his own kite. Farkash scoured the area for materials and in minutes assembled a kite for the boy. Farkash said to him, "Be happy boy, enjoy your youth. Play games and be happy. At least you won't have a deprived childhood." [EL]²⁴⁷ From this comment the boy understood that Farkash suffered as a child. He did not yet know how.

Farkash's attempt to help was noble, yet naïve. He so much wanted the boy to succeed that he tried to give him shortcuts to get there. He was acting like a father trying to help his son. Farkash wanted to prevent the boy from suffering like he did as a youth. Perhaps he was a bit overeager in his approach. The boy would still have to go through the school of hard knocks.

²⁴⁷ Sabato. *Boi*, P. 52

The freedom of the children in this chapter hints at a social malady common in these absorption centers. The narrative describes some of the derelict behavior of the embittered men of Beit Mazmil.

בשיכון עולים היו הרבה מרי נפש שאת צרת נפשם שיכחו ב"מחיה", העראק שתמיד
היה מזומן אצלם כדי לשמחם, ושעליו הוציאו את מעותיהם האחרונות. אלא שהוא
לא שימח אותם אלא המר להם עוד.²⁴⁸

The transition to the new country did not fare well for many of the men. The language barrier and the lack of certain skills forced them out of the work force. Some of these men resorted to drinking to soothe their sorrows. The children of Beit Mazmil suffered the worst. The fathers could not provide for them the guidance that they needed. The children quickly learned that it was easier to remain outdoors away from the disgruntled parents, and began to create a world of their own. It is not surprising that many of these street children adopted unhealthy and anti-social practices. Poor immigrant centers like Beit Mazmil created many difficult challenges for parents. With a lack of strong father figures, continuity of the tradition was minimal in these neighborhoods. With the lack of a functional father figure in the home, the children were vulnerable to many negative influences.

The narrator grew up inspired and devoted to the Jewish tradition. His siblings all remained observant, and most of them are practicing rabbis and teachers. With all of the challenges the Sabato family faced in Beit Mazmil, the fact that all of the children remained committed to the tradition is noteworthy. The reader is left to wonder what was the family's secret of success. It may be due to the fact that the father spent as much time with the family as time allowed. Shabbat and holidays were used for quality family time. Despite the hardships, the father did his utmost to maintain the family unit. This routine contributed to the positive growth of the children.

17.7 Chapter 7

²⁴⁸ Sabato. Boi, P. 37

The narrator's next meeting with Farkash came after many months. The boy heard that Farkash established his own synagogue in the Hadassah clinic building. This building served as a multifunctional community center and Farkash insisted that it also be used as a synagogue. "Farkash always got what he asked for." [EL]²⁴⁹ This was added to the long string of positive attributes that the narrator found in Farkash, the highly capable father figure.

Farkash helped young boys to celebrate their Bar Mitzvah. Most of the street children were at risk of falling into the hands of local gangs. Farkash worked hard to give them a feeling of belonging and warmth. He showered them with sweets and kind words and promised them a joyful celebration if they would stay to learn their part. The narrator was asked to escort one of the young boys to Farkash for his Bar Mitzvah training. The narrator again noticed the latent sadness in his eyes. Farkash began to disclose his secret past.

לי איש לא עשה קידוש בבר מצווה. אבא כבר מזמן לא היה. נפטר מצער המעשה הנורא ביום המר במלחמה העולמית הראשונה בגבול סרביה. אמא, אמא שלי האהובה, היתה חולה, החנות הקטנה שפתחו לה אנשים טובים שכיבדו את תורתו של אבא, שהיה משכים לבית המדרש ושוקד על התורה כל היום, התמוטטה בגלל חובות כבדים. בלב נשבר קבלה את החלטת הדודות לפזר את כולנו.²⁵⁰

Farkash grew up as an orphan. His father died long before his Bar Mitzvah. He did not have a celebration when he turned thirteen. His father was a learned man who left behind many students. After his untimely death, the father's friends tried to help the mother financially. Unfortunately, the store she opened failed, and the mother could no longer support the children. Each one was sent to work in a different city.

Traditionally, the father was the main provider for the family and his presence offered protection for the children. When the father died, the children became defenseless. The mother was weak and helpless, and was left

²⁴⁹ Sabato. Boi, P. 59

²⁵⁰ Sabato. Boi, P. 60

with no choice but to give up the children. This first real disclosure by Farkash exposed his own inner search for a father figure. Perhaps this is what drove Farkash to behave like a father for all those in need.

Farkash lost himself in his recollections. He lowered his guard for a moment and talked about his harsh and lonely childhood. The narrator proved to be a good listener, and for the first time, Farkash felt comfortable sharing his secret past. Farkash's fragmented soul found solace in the guise of a teenage boy. For a moment the narrator served as the supportive father. After a few moments Farkash caught himself, regretting having said too much. He hoped that his rambling was not heard by the boy. He turned his attention back to the Bar Mitzvah boy, "Mazel Tov! Congratulations. Yours will be a great celebration." [EL] ²⁵¹ Farkash had once again transformed back to the father.

17.8 Chapter 8

The narrator's mother filled the void of the father in fulfilling the command to train the child in Torah study. Upon returning from a long day at school, the narrator wished to relax. His mother pushed him to participate in the afternoon prayers and daily study group. She would not change her mind, despite all of his complaints. The culture in the family was one of excellence and scholarship. Relaxing was not a familiar concept. The mother and father were in complete agreement in this area. The mother was the daughter of the great Rabbi Shwekey, the grandfather mentioned in all of the author's works. Torah study was very important to her. Although the father was not visible in the story, his beliefs and values were in sync with the mother's.

הרב שפיצר קראנו לו, סבב בין הצריפים ואסף ילדים ללימוד תורה בין מנחה למעריב בבית-הכנסת האשכנזי. אומרים שפרקש הביא אותו לשכונה, וביקש מאבא

²⁵¹ Sabato. Boi, P. 63

לאסוף בשבילו ילדי עולים. מן היום הראשון שבאנו ממצרים דאג אבא רק לתלמוד
תורה לילדים.²⁵²

This subtle line reveals much about the level of commitment and passion of the narrator's father towards the tradition. The family was in transition, food was scarce and it was difficult to find a place to live. Yet, the father's main concern was for the children's Torah studies. This is true dedication to the mission of Jewish fathering. With the constant study of Torah at the core of the culture, the father guarantees the child's knowledge and dedication to the tradition. Perhaps this provides one answer as to the reason for the successful transmission of the tradition in the Sabato family.

Each day after finishing the lesson, Rabbi Spitzer would conclude with a story. The story was about a father and two sons who lived in Hungary. The Germans killed the parents, and the two boys were sent to the camps. The father had given one son his Tefillin for the arm, and the other son the Tefillin for the head. Each one went through the war with his half of the pair of Tefillin. After the war, the two boys were reunited, and so was the pair of Tefillin. This section provides an example of how the father did what he could to train his children in the fulfillment of the commands, even in the most difficult circumstances.

17.9 Chapter 9

The author reiterates his passion for poetry. This chapter is filled with quotes of poems written by famous authors, by Farkash, and by the author himself. Farkash wrote a poem in memory of his father, while the author wrote in memory of those who were killed in the Holocaust.

Farkash revealed another segment of his secret past. He was six years old when his father died. On his death bed, the father called the young Farkash to relay to him his personal story from the First World War. Farkash explained

²⁵² Sabato. Boi, P. 69

to the narrator that his father was a man of truth, and the truth must be told. Despite the mother's protests, the father proceeded to tell the young Farkash everything that happened to him. This incident highlights the unique qualities of the father, and the wish of the son to emulate these qualities. Also, it touches on the importance of the father's sharing with the son his personal story.

At the end of the chapter, Farkash stopped the story in the middle and repeated the message, "Must tell the story, must always tell the truth."²⁵³ Farkash took this lesson to heart and tried to find a way to fulfill it himself. The story of his childhood was very painful, and he suppressed the memories deep inside. Through telling his story to the narrator, he hoped that one day his children would find out and understand what he experienced. This volume would become the vehicle to tell the true story of Farkash.

In an earlier section of this research, the topic of Haggadah, telling the Passover story, was discussed. The Torah commands the father to tell the story of the Exodus from Egypt on the evening of Passover. This vehicle of storytelling is so important in the Jewish tradition. The father is supposed to relay the story in such vivid detail that the child will feel as if he himself walked out of Egypt. In this section, Sabato has widened this command. In the words of Farkash, he tells the reader, "The truth be told." Every father should strive to share his personal story with his children. By identifying with the parental narrative, the children become part of the chain. This will help the children understand their own place in the world and may infuse them with a sense of pride for their family, their heritage, and their tradition. Farkash withheld his story from his children so as not to cause them pain in their younger years. He knew, however, that his story is about truth, and the truth must be eventually told to the children.

17.10 Chapter 10

²⁵³ Sabato. Boi, P. 81

The narrator is called urgently to visit Farkash. Farkash was hopeful that he would recover after his operation. He felt a need to share more details of his past with his close friends. His family was still unaware of his tragic story. Farkash was happy that he would live to attend his daughter's wedding. He also wanted to make sure that his son Yossi completed his rabbinic ordination. After all, this child was named after Farkash's father. His legacy must carry on.²⁵⁴

The father is responsible to make sure the children marry. Having grandchildren is viewed in the tradition as part of the fulfillment of the command to procreate. Some rabbinic opinions hold that the command to "be fruitful and multiply" is not complete until one has a grandson and a granddaughter from two separate children.²⁵⁵ Farkash did everything possible to encourage his children to marry.

The other aspect of fathering mentioned here is the father's wish for his child to be a Talmudic scholar. Teaching Torah to the children is a primary goal. Farkash himself grew up in the home of a great scholar. From the start, he was trained in the fundamentals of Talmudic study. He was sent to a yeshiva where Talmud was studied rigorously. After his father passed away, he was forced to end his studies and go to work. In his new surroundings, he could not understand how the local Jews disregarded Torah study. When he had a free moment, he would open his lone volume of Talmud and learn. His only wish was to see his son become a proper scholar.

After arriving in Israel, Farkash strived to avail many people the opportunity to learn Torah. He encouraged the narrator to teach a weekly class in Talmud, which Farkash himself attended religiously. His love for Torah, and his efforts

²⁵⁴ This concept of naming the children after the grandparents is an outgrowth of the respect accorded to the elders by the tradition. The newborn child is not merely the start of a new generation, rather a continuum and a link in a long chain.

²⁵⁵ Shulchan Aruch Code of Jewish Law, Even Ha'Ezer 1:6

to encourage others to learn, left a strong impression on his children and on the narrator himself.

Farkash described the hardships he sustained in Hungary. After his father died, his mother made great sacrifices to support her children. The most precious items in the house were the Torah books of her late husband. One by one, she sold the volumes to buy food. She cried each time, stroking and kissing the holy volumes before parting with them, begging them for forgiveness. The only one she kept was the small volume entitled Bava Metziah, her late husband's favorite. This volume went with him on every journey. She presented it to Farkash with a request to study from it like his father before him, "when he lies down and when he rises up."²⁵⁶ This was the example that the father set for the child. The mother wished to continue the mission her husband started.

אתה תזכור את אביך ואת תורתו, את שקידתו ואת העמקתו, את אהבתו לתורה
ואת דבקו באמת. ובבוא היום תעביר את המפתח הזה לבניך אחריו. את הסיפור
שלו נתן לך אבא ביום מותו. בו תתפלל ובו תתחנן לפני בוראך. שלשלת אחת של
זהב, ושני מפתחות לה: הסיפור והגמרא.²⁵⁷

The only inheritance that Farkash received from his parents was the father's prayer book and the single volume of the Talmud. The image used by the mother is one of a golden chain. The survival, or continuity, of the Jewish tradition depends on two keys: Prayer and Torah study. Farkash's mother begged him to pass down these traditions to his children.

The situation at home worsened. The mother was bedridden and the children needed support. It was decided that Farkash would be sent to work in a bakery. Prior to his departure, Farkash studied Talmud day and night. His greatest fear was that he would forget all of the Torah that he knew.

²⁵⁶ Deuteronomy 6:7. This verse describes the obligation to study Torah during all times and in all situations.

²⁵⁷ Sabato. Boi, P. 97

אבא תמיד הזהיר אותי, רק לא להיות עם הארץ.²⁵⁸

For a Talmudic scholar there is no greater insult than to be labelled an “Am Ha’Aretz”. Literally, this expression means, “The people of the land”. The plain meaning is ignoramus. The phrase is first found in the Bible when Abraham asked to purchase a burial place for his wife Sarah.

ויקם אברהם וישתחו לעם הארץ.²⁵⁹

In this verse, the phrase *עם הארץ* refers to the masses of the Hittite tribe that were gathered in the town square to greet Abraham. This was not meant in a derogatory fashion. However, during the time of the Second Commonwealth, this phrase was used to set apart the rabbinic scholars from the ignorant farmers. Often, the “people of the land” lived in rural areas, and were not a part of the Talmudic discourse in the larger cities. Those who were ignorant of Jewish law were labelled Am Ha’Aretz.²⁶⁰ Farkash’s father was articulate about his priorities and values. He impressed upon his son the gift of knowledge and warned him not to fall into the category of Am Ha’Aretz.

17.11 Chapter 11

ילד יתום בר מצוה, בודד ורחוק, נתון לחסדי אופה זקן שחצי ראשו שקוע במגבעת, מקטרת ארוכה תחובה לו בקצה פיו ועיניו זועפות תמיד. אם תפילתי תהיה שגורה בפי, סימן הוא לשנים טובות. ואם לאו? הוצאתי את הסידור הקטן היקר לי, הסידור הקטן שאבא נתן לי לפני פטירתו, והתכוונתי בתפילה בכל כוחי, עד כלות הנפש. להתכוון בתפילה למדתי מאבא, אבל הדמעות היו שלי.²⁶¹

From the earliest age, Farkash’s father trained him in the mechanics and intentions of Jewish prayer. On his death bed, the father handed him his personal prayer book and requested that he use it every day of his life. This

²⁵⁸ Sabato. Boi, P. 98

²⁵⁹ Genesis 23:7

²⁶⁰ גדי אלגזי, *הערים בימי הביניים* (תל אביב: אוניברסיטת תל אביב, 1998).

²⁶¹ Sabato. Boi, P. 104

left a lasting impression on the young boy, leaving him with an unwavering sense of commitment and responsibility.

There is a reference in the sources for the father's charge to the sons prior to death. In the end of Genesis,²⁶² Jacob invited his twelve sons to bless them before his death. He wanted to caution them from certain behavior in the future. Jacob also admonished each of the children for certain sins that they performed. Jacob waited until his last moments because he knew this would have a lasting impact on his children. On his death bed, Farkash's father behaved in a similar way, praying that his son would always remain loyal to the tradition.

Farkash described his first day in the bakery. Seizing the moment, he paused to say the afternoon prayers. He knew that his fate was in the balance and this first prayer may prove weighty in the outcome of his stay. Farkash took out his father's prayer book and poured his heart out to God. At that moment, he felt as if his father was standing next to him to reassure him that everything would be alright. Farkash began to take stock of his situation. He was an orphan, alone in a strange place, far from anyone who knew him, and placed in the care of a frightful man. This situation was a direct result of his losing his father. He was completely vulnerable. The aspect of father as protector is emphasized in this section.

The memories of his surroundings included details of the house and surrounding fields. Farkash would seek refuge in nature, taking pleasure from the beautiful sights and smells of nature. The beehives reminded him that even the tiniest of creatures had a "Mother" to watch over them, and listen to their problems. Farkash wished he could tell his mother about his observations of nature. He understood that his situation was far from natural. He longed for connection and the sense of security that parents provide their children. This lack of a parent to share life experiences is difficult for the child.

²⁶² Genesis 49

The baker treated Farkash harshly from the first day on the job. His behavior was volatile and unpredictable, making it impossible to please him. Farkash had been told back home that the baker served alongside his father in the First World War. Farkash's father had saved the baker's life, and this would be a way for him to repay the kindness.

יחד שכבו בשוחה אחת. אותו איש סיפר שאבא טיפל בו, באופה, כשנראו בו סימני המחלה הנוראה שהפילה חללים בכל הגדוד. מגיפת הטיפוס התפשטה אז במהירות רבה ולא הבדילה בין שני צידי החזית....כולם ברחו אז באימה מן החולים. רק הרופאים הצבאיים, רובם יהודים, טיפלו בהם. אבא ישב לצידו של האופה ודאג להשקותו כל כמה רגעים מרק חם.²⁶³

This section sheds more light on the virtues of Farkash's father. In the midst of an epidemic, when everyone chose to flee to safety, Farkash's father remained to assist the doctors in caring for the sick. His father was a war hero. In the face of danger, the father did not run. His compassion and concern for the wellbeing of others was exemplary. This is the image of the ideal father that would remain with Farkash for the rest of his life. It's no surprise that his own behavior as an adult was so selfless and benevolent. Farkash spent his entire life trying to assist others. These acts of kindness were voluntary and performed in the quietest manner.

It would have been easy to turn bitter and cruel after all that Farkash sustained in his early years. Yet, the shining examples of love and kindness that he received from his parents were strong. The cruelty and suffering that he experienced did not dim the light that glowed inside him. He felt driven to carry on the torch that he was handed, to bring positive cheer and assistance to all around him.

Farkash recalled how, during his bakery deliveries, he would occasionally receive a candy from the kind people in the town. He would savor these sweets in his mouth for hours, giving him strength to survive the bitter times at the bakery. As Farkash became a father, he constantly gave his children

²⁶³ Sabato. Boi, P. 106

candies and chocolates. On the holiday of Simchat Torah, he would hand out treats to all the children in the synagogue. His goal was to endear the Torah in their eyes. Farkash wished that every child would have a happy childhood.

טוב לי לראות ילדות מתוקה וילדים צוחקים.²⁶⁴

There are a few instances that the father is advised to provide tangible treats for the children in the Jewish tradition. On the holiday of Chanukah, when the family gathers to light the Menorah, it is a tradition that the father hands out coins to the children. This gift is called “Chanukah Gelt”. The money is a reward for the children’s future dedication to Torah study. The word Chanukah has the same Hebrew root as the word Chinuch, or education. The holiday of Chanukah is a time to focus on the Chinuch of the children. The fathers are to encourage the children to remain loyal and devoted to the tradition.²⁶⁵

A second example of this type of fatherly behavior appears in the discussion of the three pilgrimage festivals. The Torah commands to rejoice on these festivals.

תנו רבנן: חייב אדם לשמח בניו ובני ביתו ברגל, שנאמר, “ושמחת בחגך”,²⁶⁶ במה משמחם? ביין.

רבי יהודה אומר: אנשים בראוי להם, ונשים בראוי להן.²⁶⁷

The obligation to bring joy to the family on the holidays is an act of endearment. As each holiday comes near, the anticipation and excitement grows. The father is commanded to shower his loved ones with gifts of clothes, special foods and treats. The Talmud describes the different types of gifts needed for the various members of the household. The type of gifts meant for the children, however, is left undefined. Maimonides explains:

²⁶⁴ Sabato. Boi, P. 109

²⁶⁵ Based on Rabbi Eliyahu Kitov, *Sefer HaToda'ah* (Book of Our Heritage, Hebrew edition), (Jerusalem: Yad Ki Tov, 2001), 122.

²⁶⁶ Deuteronomy 16:14

²⁶⁷ Babylonian Talmud, Pesachim 119A

Maimonides suggests that the children need something age appropriate in order to give them a sense of joy. New clothing or delicious meat may not make the holiday more special for them. The father is to give the children roasted nuts and sweet treats to fulfill this command properly.

The source for this law is a discussion of debate amongst the commentaries. The original Talmudic passage did not discuss what type of gifts are appropriate for children. Some suggest that Maimonides took this answer from an additional Talmudic passage in Tractate Pesachim²⁶⁹. The Talmud discusses that Rabbi Akiva had a custom to hand out walnuts to his children prior to the Passover Seder in order to keep them awake. This may have been the inspiration for Maimonides to include the gifts of roasted nuts to the children for each of the holidays.

In both of the cited examples, Chanukah and the Festivals, the father is encouraged to provide tangible treats for the children. This helps to create positive memories for the children and instill in them a love for the tradition and its special days. This also gives the children the opportunity to experience a side of the father that may not have been so typical throughout the year. The sweetness of the candy coupled with the cheerful generosity of the father makes the holiday experience more memorable.

At the end of the chapter, Farkash revealed the secret story of the baker. During the First World War he contracted typhus. Farkash's father attended to him in his illness. His fever raged and the doctors said he would probably not live. Food was scarce and the soldiers were fighting over a crust of bread. He realized that in order to survive, one would need to fight for basics like bread. At that moment he made himself a promise. If he would survive, he would become a baker and never lack for bread again.

²⁶⁸ Rambam, Yad HaChazaka, Laws of Yom Tov 6:18

²⁶⁹ Babylonian Talmud, Pesachim 108A

Many years had passed and now a new war was brewing in Europe. The baker understood that times were going to get hard again. When Farkash was sent to be his apprentice, he made a secret promise to the mother that he would toughen her boy and raise his chance of survival. Only the tough ones will remain. These were the same words that this mother wrote him in her departing letter.

שא את העול בגבורה, הרם ראש....כי אדם מברזל מחושל הוא ובפני הרצון לא
יעמוד דבר.²⁷⁰

The baker was not as cruel as he appeared. He owed the father a kindness and was trying to repay him by hardening his orphaned son. It would be Farkash's only chance of survival. As the Nazis began to round up the Jews for deportation, Farkash was arrested together with the others. An anonymous man approached Farkash with a bundle of bread. The package came with a letter from the baker, "You are now made of steel. I promised your mother that I would make you into a man. Be strong. Be a man. You will survive the terrible storm approaching."^[EL]²⁷¹ In the presence of the narrator, Farkash asked to publicly forgive the baker for everything that he did to him.

This section raises many difficult questions when studied from the angle of child rearing. The situation that Farkash experienced was not normal and the cruel behavior of the characters was far from exemplary. The underlying message is still valid. The parent who makes life too easy for the child, intervening too quickly when the child confronts adversity, may actually hinder the child's development. A child must learn to cope with life's many challenges. It hurts to see a child suffer or fail. Yet, at times, it is the school of hard knocks that is needed to transform a boy into a man.²⁷²

²⁷⁰ Sabato. *Boi*, P. 115

²⁷¹ Sabato. *Boi*, P. 119

²⁷² See Malcolm Gladwell, *David and Goliath: Underdogs, Misfits and the Key to Battling Giants* (New York, Boston, and London: Little, Brown and Co, 2013).

Farkash was careful never to let his mother know about his suffering. He thought she was too frail to hear about such things. In the end, Farkash learned that she had actually requested from the baker to harden her son and make a man out of him. Farkash was sent to the baker at the age of thirteen, the age of Bar Mitzvah. This is when the father traditionally introduces the son into manhood. The father encourages the son to behave like a full member of society. The child must learn to delay gratification and prepare himself for a life of service and giving to the community.

This process of maturation has many steps, and the child must go through them gradually. In a normal family setting, the parents oversee this process and guide the child gently through each phase. In Farkash's situation the baker saw himself as a catalyst, hoping to mature the boy quickly. He didn't know how much time he would have, so he resorted to drastic measures. A typical father would not have behaved towards his son in this manner. He may need to censure his child or mete out punishments of one type or another. However, the father is invested in the long term and should not resort to physical abuse to educate his son.

The baker was performing the fatherly task of teaching the son a trade. His methods are questionable, but the baker succeeded in teaching Farkash many aspects of the profession. As Farkash arrived in Israel, the skills he learned by the baker served him well as he began to make a life for himself.

17.11.1 Corporal Punishment

The question can be raised: does the tradition support the punitive methods of the baker in educating the boy? The traditional sources discuss the issue of corporal punishment in numerous places. The first mention comes from the Book of Proverbs. It should be stated that these ancient sources may not be in sync with current trends of parenting and education.

The literal translation of this verse states, “One who spares the rod hates his son”. This verse hints at the need to implement physical punishment in the education of the son. Some suggest that the word שבט refers to harsh words of rebuke, and not an actual rod.²⁷⁴ However, this interpretation is the minority opinion.

The father may wish to refrain from corporal punishment as his heart feels close to the boy, and it would go against his nature to inflict pain. The verse states that this may not be a demonstration of love, rather the opposite. The father who holds back his rod may be considered one who hates his son.

The father’s task is to help the child navigate between his own desires and the dictates of the tradition and society. The child must understand the tension between independence and self-activation, and submission to authority. The child cannot do everything that he wishes. Some children will respond to the verbal guidance of the parents, while some may require a physical reminder in their training.

The second source is a similar verse from the Proverbs:

אל תמנע מנער מוסר כי תכנו בשבט לא ימות.²⁷⁵

In this second verse, the use of the rod comes together with the verb to hit, כי תכנו. The mode of relaying verbal rebuke is seen as a separate action from the use of the rod. The verse adds that the use of the rod will not kill the boy, as that is not the intention. It is meant only to warn him and remind him of the proper, desired behavior.

This next source is aimed more at the teacher than the father.

²⁷³ Proverbs 13:24

²⁷⁴ Metzudat David, Rabbi David Altshuler, 1687–1769, Polish Biblical commentator.

²⁷⁵ Proverbs 23:13

אמר ליה רב לרב שמואל בר שילת - עד שית לא תקביל, מכאן ואילך קביל ואספי ליה כתורא. ואמר ליה רב לרב שמואל בר שילת - כי מחית לינוקא, לא תימחי אלא בערקתא דמסנא.²⁷⁶

The teacher is allowed to reprimand the student when training him in Torah study. The same rule would apply to the father. This method should only be implemented once the boy passes the age of six. When he does so, the teacher should only use a light leather strap, like the strap from a shoe, and not an actual rod.

This Talmudic discussion is brought down in the law books of the Code of Jewish Law and the Maimonides.

מכניסין את התינוקות להתלמד כבן שש כבן שבע לפי כח הבן ובנין גופו... ומכה אותן המלמד להטיל עליהם אימה, ואינו מכה אותם מכת אויב מכת אכזרי, לפיכך לא יכה אותם בשוטים ולא במקלות אלא ברצועה קטנה.²⁷⁷

In early times, the use of corporal punishment may have been standard procedure for teachers. The teacher had to be very careful not to use this as a means to vent his anger or frustration on the child. The use of excessive force may turn the child away. The goal was to instill fear and respect of the authority figure.

The Nachmanides²⁷⁸ refers to corporal punishment as a natural part of the culture in those days. The Talmud discusses a case in which the father hits the child, causing a wound or bruise. The question is raised as to the financial liability of the father in such a case. The law states that if the son is no longer eating at the father's table, the father was liable to pay for damages concurred. On the other hand, if the son was still living at home, even in the case where the punishment caused an injury, the father was exempt to pay the son for damages. Nachmanides gives his reasoning for this law:

²⁷⁶ Babylonian Talmud, Baba Batra 21A

²⁷⁷ Rambam, Yad HaChazaka, Laws of Talmud Torah 2:2, Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah, 245:8-10

²⁷⁸ Nachmanides, Rabbi Moshe ben Nachman, AKA Ramban, Talmudist and Biblical commentator, 1194-1270, Spain.

מילתא דטעמא היא, שכיון שסמוכים על שולחנו דין הוא שאם חבל בהן יהא פטור, שאין לך אדם שאינו מכה בנו ורודה את תלמידו. ופעמים שהוא חובל בהם יותר מן הראוי, ואם אתה מעמידו בדין אין לך איבה גדולה מזו, שמעלה טינא על לבו ושוב לא יסמכם על שלחנו.²⁷⁹

The tradition held that it was more important for the father to continue to feed the child than to penalize the father for the injury. Nachmanides adds that it was rare to find a father that didn't occasionally physically censure his child, or a teacher that did not punish his students. Even if the father lost control, it was still preferable to exempt the father from payment, and not put the son's support at risk.

Gutel²⁸⁰ challenges the opinion that the tradition never allowed corporal punishment. The word שבט clearly means a rod and not harsh words. Gutel agrees that modern educational approaches and methods have forged a change in this area. However the traditional sources, which reflect earlier eras, with their specific social customs, permitted the implementation of this form of punishment.

17.11.2 Age-Appropriate Education

Farkash requested that his story remain a secret during his lifetime.

איני רוצה שתהיה להם ילדות שדודה. שמחים הם בשמחת חייהם, וכך אני רוצה לראות אותם. כשבניי יגדלו ויהיו לאנשים, יבוא יום ותספרו את הסיפור.²⁸¹

Farkash understood too well what it was to have his childhood stolen. He did not have the opportunity to laugh and be carefree. Happiness was the greatest gift he could offer his children. Their laughter was therapy for his troubled soul. There would be plenty of time for them to learn about the hardships that he endured in the past. He believed that the father has to use good judgment

²⁷⁹ Ramban in מלחמות ה', to Babylonian Talmud, Baba Kamma 87B, found on Alfasi pages (רי"ף) Baba Kamma 31A

²⁸⁰ Nerya Gutel, "הכאת ילדים: בין הלכה להלכה למעשה", *S'deh Chemed* (Jerusalem: Da'at, 2000).

²⁸¹ Sabato. Boi, P. 120

and common sense when sharing his personal story with his children. Young children have limitations on their understanding of real life issues. Difficult or painful topics can cause unnecessary emotional stress.

The tradition upholds this concept of adapting to the child's age and stage.

חנוך לנער על פי דרכו גם כי יזקין לא יסור ממנה²⁸².

This verse describes the need to tailor the educational program to the needs of the child. This could also be understood in regards to the personality strengths and interests that the child displays. The father should be aware of the child's strengths and capitalize on them. The child who is taught according to his own nature will be more likely to remain strong in his beliefs as he gets older.

Another possible interpretation to this verse is to educate the child according to his stage of development. על פי דרכו means on his course or path. As the child moves along the various stages of growth, it is important for the father to adapt the level of instruction. Farkash was very careful not to ignore this advice.

Another source that addresses the art of adapting the message for the child is found in the instructions of the Passover Seder:

מזגו לו כוס שני אין דעת בבן, אביו מלמדו, מה נשתנה הלילה הזה מכל הלילות,
שבכל הלילות אנו אוכלין חמץ ומצה, הלילה הזה כלו מצה. שבכל הלילות אנו
אוכלין שאר ירקות, הלילה הזה מרור. שבכל הלילות אנו אוכלין בשר צלי, שלוק,
ומבשל, הלילה הזה כלו צלי שבכל הלילות אנו מטבילין טו פעם אחת, הלילה הזה
שתי פעמים. ולפי דעתו של בן, אביו מלמדו. מתחיל בגנות ומסיים בשבח, ודורש
מארמי אובד אבי, עד שיגמור כל הפרשה כלה.²⁸³

"According to the intellect of the child, the father should teach him." [EL] At the Passover Seder the father is commanded to retell the story of the Exodus. This act could not be identical year after year, as the father needs to tailor the

²⁸² Proverbs 22:6

²⁸³ Mishnah Pesachim, 10:4

story to the intellectual growth of the child. A young child would require a short, simple rendition. As the child grows older, the father must share an elaborate, detailed version of the story. The tradition is suggesting that the father must learn and understand the child's stage and recalibrate his approach accordingly. Not every child is equipped to hear the details about the enslavement and redemption of the Jewish people of old. The parent must select what is appropriate for each child to hear. Regarding his personal story, Farkash learned this lesson well and only shared with his children what was appropriate for their ears.

The children burst into the room. They asked Farkash to resolve an argument. The older daughter had told her brother the story of Farkash's arrival in Palestine. As the British soldiers seized the refugee boat, he jumped into the icy waters and swam ten kilometers to dry land. The only object he took with him was his cherished prayer book that he received from his father. Yossi did not believe his sister. Farkash reassured the children that the story was true. He added, "Only the ones who are tough as steel survive."²⁸⁴ As suggested above, Farkash chose carefully which stories to tell his children. The older daughter was privy to the heroic manner in which he arrived to Palestine. Yossi obviously had not yet heard the story. His time would come. Farkash was a bigger than life model for his children. The children revered and admired their father, making the acceptance of his beliefs and practices of the tradition that much easier.

17.12 Chapter 12

Farkash recovered from his illness. He went right back to work and to helping others. He arranged the matches of two couples, and danced at each of their weddings. Marriage and family life were extremely important to him. He went out of his way to assist others to create a family of their own. Even when

²⁸⁴ Sabato. Boi, P. 121

the matches seemed unlikely, Farkash had the magic to break down social barriers.

His daughter Zipporah married and Farkash lived to see his first grandchild. His son became a seasoned Torah reader and cantor. He was careful to lead the services in the tune he learned from his father, נוסח בית אבא. The son also advanced in his Talmudic studies. This gave Farkash a tremendous feeling of gratitude and joy.

This cheerful scene is a welcomed change in the story. After many chapters of pain and suffering, sickness and death, the narrative switches to weddings and births. This switch does not last long.

Yom Kippur arrived. On the most solemn day of the year, in the middle of the prayers, sirens were sounded. One by one, the young men left the synagogue to join the other soldiers at the front. Israel was under attack from all sides.

The author includes in the narrative a liturgical poem regarding the binding of Isaac. This poem is traditionally sung in Sephardic synagogues prior to the afternoon prayers on Yom Kippur. According to the legend, Abraham bound his son Isaac on Yom Kippur afternoon. Abraham and Isaac, father and son, marched together to fulfill the will of God. The narrative juxtaposes this incident with the soldiers leaving the synagogue for the battlefield. Symbolically, the soldiers were just as willing to give up their lives for the sake of the Jewish people as Isaac.

The incident of the binding of Isaac raises difficult questions of faith. Tradition has it that Abraham was known as a man of kindness, who opposed the common practice of human sacrifice. The command to sacrifice Isaac undermined everything he stood for. The command to sacrifice his son on the altar was a test of blind faith. It went against all logic, yet was performed wholeheartedly by both father and son. Isaac displayed an equal amount of loyalty and commitment to God's will as his father Abraham. Abraham

succeeded in imbuing his son with the sense of total commitment to the dictates of God.

Farkash was growing older. Before his death, he made the narrator promise that his son Yossi would receive a proper Torah education. The narrator, as acting head of a yeshiva, welcomed Yossi as a student in his institution. As the years passed, the narrator watched as Yossi blossomed into a refined gentleman and a Torah scholar. Farkash passed away before Yossi was ordained as rabbi. However, he had done his job properly, ensuring that his son carry on the tradition as had been passed to him from his father.

17.13 Chapter 13

Ten years prior, Farkash revealed to the narrator his second request. He handed him the two books that he received from his parents, the prayer book and the small volume of Talmud. These books brought inspiration to Farkash in his darkest hours.

הסידור והגמרא הזאת ירושה הם לי מאבא זכרונו לברכה. ירושה יחידה. את כל הספרים של אבא אמא מכרה בעונייה, אבל את הגמרא הזאת לא הסכימה למכור. גם את אהבת האמת ירשתי ממנו, ואת אהבת התורה. מאמא ירשתי את הדמעות, את אהבת הבריות ואת אהבת השירה. מה הורשתי אני לילדיי אין אני יודע, אבל בטוח אני שימשיכו את השלשלת.²⁸⁵

The prayer book and the volume of the Talmud were symbols of the struggles that Farkash and his father endured. The Siddur remained in Farkash's possession throughout his ordeal. The small volume of Talmud was miraculously returned to Farkash years after the war.

Farkash told the narrator the miracle of the prayer book. The father's prayer book had survived World War 1. His tears left stains on its pages. Farkash kept the prayer book safe, even in the most dangerous situations. At the baker's home, Farkash cried every day into the prayer book. When the SS

²⁸⁵ Sabato. Boi, P. 139

took away all of their belongings, Farkash managed to keep it hidden. The prayer book remained with him in the concentration camps. As his refugee boat approached the coast of Haifa, it was surrounded by British Navy ships. Farkash could not bear the thought of being arrested after all he had been through. Farkash opened his prayer book, said the wayfarer's prayer, and jumped into the icy waters, with the prayer book still open to the page. He swam ten kilometers to the shore and was saved. Farkash showed the narrator the faded print on the page.

את הסידור הזה לא תפסו הליסטים. תמיד ידעתי, זכותו של אבא עומדת לי שיישאר
בידי... עם הסידור הזה זינקתי לים הפתוח.²⁸⁶

It is easy to understand the sentimental value the prayer book had for Farkash. This book was a source of inspiration for his father and himself. The two men had gone through so much hardship and the words of the prayer book were an oasis of relief from their pain. The prayer book was handed to Farkash as his father's dying wish. The young boy would treasure that moment, and the prayer book for the rest of his life. Farkash put his own life in danger to make sure nothing would happen to it. The book was like a part of his father, who would watch over him like his guardian angel. The time was getting near for Farkash to pass the prayer book to his own son. He decided to entrust the precious book, and the lone volume of Talmud, to the narrator. When the time was right, he would pass them on to Yossi.²⁸⁷

The narrator waited patiently as Yossi finished his rabbinic ordination and teacher's degree. He was instrumental in Yossi's appointment as headmaster of the local school. The narrator enrolled his own child to learn in the school.²⁸⁸ The narrator was invited to celebrate the first grade prayer book ceremony. At the ceremony, the principal, Rabbi Yossi Farkash, shared a brief

²⁸⁶ Sabato. *Boi*, P. 148

²⁸⁷ From a literary point of view, the Siddur is a leit motif, that symbolizes the tradition, which is an abstract concept.

²⁸⁸ This is a rare reference in Sabato's works to his personal children.

story and then handed the children their first prayer book. He explained to the children that their new prayer book should be treated like a close friend. As the last Siddur was handed out, the narrator arose before the audience and announced, "Now that all the children have received their prayer books, I would also like to present a prayer book to Rabbi Farkash."²⁸⁹ He handed him Farkash's tattered prayer book. The narrator smiled, knowing he had fulfilled his second promise.

17.14 Chapter 14

Farkash asked the narrator for a third favor. Farkash revealed to the narrator his father's deepest secret. This secret was whispered to Farkash in his father's last moments. During one of the battles, the father's company made a surprise attack against the Serbs. In the shroud of darkness, he attacked the enemy with all his might. As his sword pierced the heart of an enemy soldier, the soldier called out with the words "Shema Yisrael". The father realized he had fatally wounded a fellow Jew. He begged the man to forgive him. The dying soldier tried to console him that he was not at fault. He forgave him wholeheartedly and asked him to bury him in the Jewish way. The father spent the rest of his life grieving over the mishap that befell him, and confessed this sin to his son in his dying breath. Farkash felt that it was important for his children to hear the truth. The narrator would be the one selected to eventually tell them.

17.15 Chapter 15

Farkash died. The narrator asked the children to describe Farkash's last moments. Farkash was weak from his illness. He asked his daughter to read a poem to him that he loved. Farkash asked to repeat the final stanza. The daughter understood from the poem that it described the transience of life.

²⁸⁹ Sabato. Boi, P. 154

The poem concluded with a prayer asking God to shine his light for one moment. The daughter asked the narrator if he believed that Farkash saw the light before he died.

Rabbi Yossi Farkash became a father. His son Moshe excelled in his Torah studies. Moshe Farkash was awarded second prize for the national Bible quiz. The narrator went to congratulate the father for his son's achievement. Yossi corrected the narrator, reminding him that the boy's full name was Moshe Aviad. The name Aviad means: my father lives forever.

Farkash's dream had come true. He raised well-adjusted, happy children who remained dedicated to the Jewish way of life. His father's sincere love of the Torah was successfully passed down for three generations, despite the hardships and challenges that Farkash experienced. The mission of Jewish continuity from father to son was complete.

17.16 Summary and Conclusions

This work highlights the protective nature of the father and the vulnerability of the family when the father is absent. The author discusses the Diskin orphanage for the Holocaust survivors in various contexts. Farkash was orphaned at the age of six, causing his entire life to crumble. Many of the children of Bet Mazmil lacked an effective father figure. As new immigrants struggling to survive, the fathers were either overworked or unemployed. These children often ended up in street gangs and involved in anti-social behavior.

The narrator's father also struggled to support the family. He was rarely seen at home, causing the narrator to seek male guidance elsewhere. The narrator was able to fill the void by spending time with the grandfather and with Farkash.

Farkash was the classic image of the father figure. He was strong and courageous. He worked constantly for the sake of those less fortunate. He

stood up for injustice. He always had an encouraging word on his lips. His presence was felt by the neighborhood boys, keeping them from furthering their mischievous ways. He understood the youthful soul and tried to channel the energy of the young boys in positive ways. Farkash loved to spoil the younger children with treats, wishing for them only joy and sweetness in their lives. His passion for the Torah lifestyle of learning and kindness was felt in everything he did. As a role model, Farkash upheld the values and qualities of his father before him. Farkash did everything he could to promote his father's legacy and ensure that his children continue in the ways of the tradition. This positive, radiant soul was able to fill a huge void for the narrator. At the same time, ironically, the narrator was able to fill a similar void for Farkash.

The passing down of the tradition from father to son plays an important role in this work. The senior Farkash was careful to impress upon his son the importance of Torah study. Farkash was successful in encouraging his son towards a life of scholarship. The passing down of the precious prayer book is another indication of the multi-generational transmission. As he grew older, Farkash's son Yossi adopted all of the prayer melodies of the father's ancestral nusach. Farkash made sure to include the children in the performance of the many charitable acts that he performed. All of these actions point to the traditional father's role in training the children.

After the Holocaust, many people felt an urgency to repopulate the Jewish nation. Farkash was successful in creating many matches. He took great pleasure dancing at these weddings. He prayed for the time when he would see his own children marry and have children of their own. As a father, he fulfilled this obligation with great enthusiasm. As a Holocaust survivor, this was the best affirmation of life that he could imagine.

Farkash facilitated the Bar Mitzvah celebration for many of the boys in Bet Mazmil. Since many of the fathers were not filling this role, Farkash took it upon himself to train the boys and acquire for them their Tefillin. Farkash

actively filled the void for many boys in the neighborhood. This fatherly behavior had a positive and lasting influence on many of the less fortunate, immigrant children of Bet Mazmil.

This entire work is a vehicle for the father's telling his story to his children. Like his father before him, Farkash wanted his children to know the truth about him. Unlike his father, Farkash was sensitive to the psychological damage his story could cause. He chose to relay his story secretly to the narrator, who would only share it when the children were older and capable to understand and appreciate. The father's personal tale of redemption, similar to the father's telling of the exodus on Passover, is a vehicle for the children's identifying with their past. Through this story, Farkash implanted in the hearts of his children an unwavering belief in God, and an appreciation of the many miracles that God wrought on his behalf. Farkash worked hard to repay the Almighty for saving his life. He worked tirelessly to bring joy and light into the lives of the tormented souls from the Holocaust. This story will help his children to understand what gave him the strength to do all that he did. They will learn the true meaning of the term father.

Farkash was the prime example of fatherly presence and availability. This attribute extended well beyond his personal family unit as he succeeded to provide sustenance, warmth and protection to so many troubled souls, in the way that only a father knows. Children, who received his fatherly influence, grew to overcome their negative behavior. Children who were not so fortunate, and suffered from their biological father's inability to function in the new country, became delinquent.

Section 18

Conclusions

This thesis is built upon social research that shows a direct corollary between the presence of fathers in the home and the positive development of the children. The occurrence of consistent and positive behavior by the father has proven to be an important factor in the children's progress. Over the past decades, the incidence of fatherless children has grown steadily, exposing more and more children to a myriad of challenges, both physical and psychological. Studies have shown that these children are at greater risk for school failure, substance abuse, teenage pregnancy, and anti-social behavior.

I propose that children that grow up in traditional Jewish families receive much of the needed paternal attention and care. The men of this community are more inclined to marry at a younger age and raise larger families. The traditional lifestyle lends itself to an abundance of quality interaction between fathers and children, creating a strong foundation for the healthy development of identity, self-esteem, and confidence.

The method of this thesis is neither quantitative nor qualitative, social nor psychological, but rather a literary study. It follows the semi biographical books of Haim Sabato and his literary characters who reflect true people in his life.

The research examines the role and responsibilities of the father as discussed in Jewish traditional sources, and identifies them in the writings of Rabbi Haim Sabato. Due to the religious nature of the author, and his breadth and depth of ancient Jewish sources, this research showed that the behavior of the father figures in this author's writings are in sync with those expressed in the ancient sources. After summarizing the various responsibilities of the Jewish father, and the positive characteristics needed for effective fathering, this research scrutinized every reference of fatherhood in Sabato's four literary

works. With the awareness of the shift in the role of the father during the past few decades, the underlying thrust of this research was to gain insight as to the efficacy of the traditional model of fathering, and the potential application of the gained understandings in further fatherhood studies.

The majority of the characters in the four literary works are observant Jewish males. As living examples of the authentic traditional way of life, the behavior of these men provide a wealth of information as to the tradition's expectations of the father.

Society has seen massive shifts in the past fifty years. The traditional family structure, in which the roles of men and women were clearly defined, has greatly diminished. As women have become an integral part of the work force, they are no longer perceived as housewives and mothers, as was common in the past, rather as partners in the development of modern society. Men are no longer viewed as the sole providers for the family.

During this period in Western society, greater emphasis has been placed on capital growth and self-realization. Both of these factors played a role in the change in attitudes of men and women towards marriage and child rearing. Combined with the growing cost of living and the high expense of child maintenance, the age of marrying has become older with each passing decade, and the number of births has decreased. With the advent of modern medicine, the concern of infant mortality has dropped considerably, allowing parents to change their views regarding family size.

Escalating divorce rates have dampened the enthusiasm and lowered the prestige of the institution of marriage. In this uncertain, transient state of affairs, many have actively chosen to remain unwed to avoid the pitfalls of the binding marital framework. For many of those that outright reject the marital option, the inclination to rear children has equally been affected.

With the rise in divorce, more and more children have been raised in single parent homes. "Absentee fathering" is a term used to describe the lack of

presence of a father figure in the home. Studies cited in the introduction of this thesis have shown a direct correlation between the father's absence and school failure, substance abuse, and anti-social behavior amongst the children. On the positive side, studies have also shown that the presence and active involvement of a father figure can positively affect self-esteem and confidence. Noticing the negative effects of father absence, governments have invested in national interventions to bring the father's back into the home, to try to break the downward spiral. At this stage, with the state of the family in flux, and the position of fatherhood weakening, much effort will be required to encourage positive change in this area.

With the delaying of marriage until the age of thirty five and older, many men find it difficult to commit to one partner for the interim of their lives. This issue poses a great challenge to the establishment of a stable family unit. To become a father, in the full sense of the word, the adult male must be prepared to make a long-term commitment. By expressing loyalty and commitment towards his partner, the man helps prepare the firm ground needed for the family to grow. Effective fathering entails a shift in perspective, from being the receiver to becoming the provider and caregiver.

It is important to emphasize that much of the above findings are based on personal life experience together with some knowledge of studies in the area of the family dynamic. This is not intended to provide conclusions in the area of social science.

This research presented a summary of the Jewish tradition's attitude towards marriage and fathering, and the current patterns of behavior in Orthodox men. Due to the religious obligation to procreate, and the cultural preference towards the marital framework, Orthodox men have shown a resilience to the changes that have transpired in the broader society. The average marrying age remains younger, and the number of children produced is higher. Comparative studies show a higher level of marital satisfaction and a lower divorce rate in this group.

The tradition plays a central role in the culture of the observant home. The routine patterns and the yearly rhythm of the holidays provide the backdrop for significant interaction between fathers and sons. Quality time, sometimes a rare commodity in modern parenting patterns, is not difficult to find in this environment.

The education and training of the children is a primary objective of the observant father. The particular custom and prayer nusach of the family is determined by the father's lineage. Expressions like *מנהג אבותינו בידינו*, *להתפלל*, *בנוסח של בית אבא*, and *מקובלני מבית אבי אבא*, point to the tradition's reliance on the father and son partnership as a means to fortify Jewish continuity.

18.1 Father as Role Model

The author describes in great detail the virtues and deeds of the ideal father figure. He uses these lengthy descriptions to provide the introduction and backdrop for many of the stories. The reader quickly learns that he is entering the inner world of a unique, virtuous group of men. This aspect confirms the suggestion that children learn best by example. Beyond the spoken words of the father, and the intense training and practice in the performance of the rituals, the son observes his father carefully. The more dedication, sincerity, and passion the father displays for the tradition, the deeper the impact he will have on the child's desire to continue to observe. In the same way the father's in these stories showed no compromise or shortcuts for themselves, they were able to demand the highest level of dedication from the children. Since many of the fathers portrayed were communal leaders, the sons were privy to the father's commitment to helping the greater society. Their paternal compassion, humility, honesty, and integrity in communal affairs were exemplary, allowing the sons to feel a sense of pride and reverence for their fathers. Each one was a tremendous source of knowledge and inspiration. With all of these factors in mind, it is understandable why a son would choose to uphold the practices of the father in his own life, *מנהג אבותינו בידינו*.

As a model of virtue, the image of the father's face is used, both in religious sources and in the four works, as a catalyst for change. In moments of adversity or temptation, the sons lean on their father's virtuous character as a source of strength and inspiration. By conjuring the father's image, the sons are able to refresh their perspective, and distance themselves from temptation. The Biblical Joseph, Jacob Sparte, Max Sparte, Ezra Siman Tov, and Farkash are examples of sons who experienced this mode of inspiration, helping them to overcome their challenges. The father continues to influence the son in a positive way even after his death. In the event that the father is not a positive, moral person, this subliminal effect on the son is lost. The son cannot rely on his image as a source of spiritual strength. This also points to the importance of the father's presence in the development of the child.

18.2 Provider and Protector

The four works are set in the pre-modern era. The fathers were the only breadwinners and the mothers remained at home with the children. All of the fathers were dutiful in this regard. Although many of them were scholars, and maintained a consistent routine of study, they went to great efforts to provide for their families. The fathers were quick to act to ensure the safety of their families in times of danger. The narrator's grandfather arranged a safe-house for the children when the German army approached Egypt. Chiya made arrangements to send Jacob away to avoid the draft into the Syrian army. Protective prayers and tears were spilled by the father when Haim was called up to fight on Yom Kippur. In the father's absence, Farkash was exposed to tremendous hardship and humiliation. As a result of his early experience, Farkash grew to become an all-encompassing father figure, providing for and protecting the weak and the downtrodden every day of his life.

The traditional lifestyle encourages the father to be industrious, hard-working, and proactive in the care of his family. Farkash was the prime

example of these attributes. This is the spirit that the author conveys in all of the characters depicted. In *בואי הרוח*, the narrator describes a group of dejected men who were not capable to support their families, or relate properly to their children. Many of the immigrant men in Bet Mazmil did not find suitable work and could not provide for their families. Some resorted to drinking to sooth their broken spirits. The children of these men did not have positive role models, and often fell into anti-social behavior.

Despite the hardships that he sustained in the transition, the narrator's father still managed to provide for his family. The firm dictates of the traditional lifestyle, and the underlying culture of constant study and growth, may have been important factors in the upbringing of the children in this complex environment. With many examples of failure in his surroundings, the narrator has much to be grateful for in the manner that his father was able to maintain his balance and cling steadfast to his ideals. He remained focused on the mission, with much self-sacrifice and perseverance.

18.3 Marriage and Procreation

Almost all of the men in the four works showed a preference to marry and have children according to the traditional custom. Most of the characters followed the pattern of arranged marriages, in which the parents were actively involved in the decision process. As the children reached the appropriate age, the fathers set upon the task of finding a suitable match for them. The author is consistent in the way he describes the match making for Jacob Sporte and Ezra Siman Tov, characters from different stories and different eras. The only men who displayed a resistance to this pattern were those who broke from the tradition completely. They chose either not to marry, or to seek their life partner independently, contrary to the accepted norm of the sect.

The modern era introduced changes in the area of courting. Ezra Siman Tov lived on the border of two distinct periods. His marriage was arranged without his ever being consulted. In arranging his match, the rabbi spoke on his behalf and finalized the details with the bride's father. Ezra's daughter did not seek her father's counsel in this matter, and eloped with a non-Jewish male nurse. Exact details are minimal in the story, but it is likely that the other children acted independently in this area as well, not allowing Ezra to select their spouses. Currently, many strictly Orthodox families still maintain the practice of arranged marriages, despite the changes concurred on the societal level. However, there still remains a large portion of the Orthodox community that the children seek their own partners. The author hinted at this trend in the marriages of Farkash's children. Despite his active encouragement to marry, Farkash did not independently arrange their matches.

The families in each of the works reared numerous children. The common practice in Halab was to produce many children, in line with the spirit of the tradition. When describing most of the families, the author refrains from writing the number of children they have. This is in sync with a Biblical custom to not count people by number.²⁹⁰ The lone reference to the family size was the description of Moise Shayo and his eight children, seven boys and one girl, in *אמת מארץ תצמח*. This is a break from the traditional restriction. It appears that Farkash had a smaller number of children, but fulfilled the traditional requirement of at least one male and one female. The overall conclusion is that each of the men in the stories upheld the marital framework and produced many children. This remains the pattern of the observant Orthodox men.

18.4 Circumcision

²⁹⁰ Exodus 30:12-13

Circumcision was carried out by the fathers in full Halab splendor. The author describes in colorful detail the Zohar ceremony, performed on the night prior to the circumcision. The special delicacies and customs surrounding the circumcision ceremony were included in the narrative. The author emphasized the love and care with which this commandment was performed. The characters experienced great frustration when the customs could not be carried out according to the Halab tradition. The essence of this commandment is the acceptance of the tradition as laid down by the Patriarch Abraham. By circumcising their sons, the fathers proclaim that their child will remain loyal to the teachings of the tradition. It is no wonder that Chiya became agitated when the more secular Jew blessed the grandson that he should grow to be a worldly scholar like his father Jacob. Chiya seized the opportunity to bless the child for a life of pure Torah study, like the child's great grandfather Raphael Sporte. The circumcision is a statement of dedication and continuity of the tradition.

18.5 Torah Study

Torah education is a central theme in all of the works. The fathers and grandfathers played an active role in teaching Torah to the children. In circumstances where the school program was questionable, the fathers instructed the children themselves. The first time entrance of the young child into a Torah framework was an event referred to numerous times in the stories. This milestone was acknowledged with great emotion, as the parents, and grandparents escorted the young child to the Talmud Torah to meet the rabbi for the first time. These moments became lasting memories for the children, allowing for a smooth entry into the world of religious study.

The fathers were strong role models for constant Torah study. Although some of the more ascetic characters were extreme in their investment of time in learning, most of the fathers were able to support their families while maintaining a serious regimen of Torah study. Those few characters in the

works that did not dedicate their lives to scholarship, displayed a propensity to remain involved in Torah learning by attending regular classes. They vocally expressed a loyalty and reverence to the rabbis and their teachings. Their biggest fear was to be labelled עם הארץ, an ignorant Jew. Farkash was an extremely busy man, involved in business and many acts of kindness. Yet, he carved out regular periods of his week to attend Talmud classes led by the narrator. Ezra Siman Tov experienced continued frustration as his children grew apart from the traditional lifestyle. Although trained in religious schools, Torah scholarship was not their focus or priority. Hearing the report that his grandson may one day become a great scholar gave him the greatest pleasure.

18.6 The Bar Mitzvah Celebration

The author describes numerous incidents of the Bar Mitzvah ceremony. The fathers joyfully commemorated the coming-of-age ceremony for their sons. They personally trained their sons to read from the Torah, and invested much effort in turning this celebration into a meaningful experience. The Bar Mitzvah of the elder Raphael Spote was a life changing moment. As he stood before the Torah, a massive earthquake shook the building. The father, who was standing beside him, protected him with his own body and saved his life. From the moment he recovered, his life was dedicated to service, out of gratitude to God.

The Bar Mitzvah celebration was used by the fathers as an opportunity to inspire their sons on the deepest level. The narrator describes the arm squeezing tactic used by the ancestor to awaken the fear of God in his son. While recounting the ancient custom, the grandfather squeezed the narrator's arm in the exact same way as the rabbi in the story, shaking him to the core. This unusual form of initiation proved successful. The father figure instilled a sense of humility and dedication in the maturing boy.

The fathers made sure that the sons performed the commandment of Tefillin according to the family's custom. At his own Bar Mitzvah, the narrator in **בואי הרוח** was instructed by his father, and assisted by the doting uncles to put on the Tefillin according to the Halab tradition. Noticing the inability of the local fathers to provide for their sons, Farkash stepped in and bought the Tefillin himself. He dedicated many hours in preparing the boys for their ceremony, and made sure the event was festive. Regardless of family background, no boy was to remain without a proper celebration. This was typical of Farkash, who acted as a father for the poor immigrant children in Bet Mazmil. In the work **תיאום כוונות**, donning the Tefillin became a symbol of lifelong Jewish commitment, as the young soldier recovered his lost pair in the broken tank. This shows how the father figure was able to transmit this key obligation to the sons.

18.7 Traditions of the Father

The children learned to pray in the nusach, or tunes, of **בית אבא**, a phrase repeated numerous times in the four works. Literally speaking, the term refers to the tunes passed down through the lineage of the father from generation to generation. On a deeper level, the term **בית אבא** conjures up the image of the family home. In the same way one feels comfortable and secure in the confines of the home, the Jew feels at home when he hears the familiar nusach of his ancestry. Even the tough gang leader Momo knew how to chant the prayers according to his father's nusach, much to the narrator's surprise.

As the various sects gathered in Israel, it became difficult to retain all of the different styles, creating tension during communal prayers. Some were more flexible, allowing for a mix of tunes. The Halab men, however, held their ancient nusach in the highest esteem, and fought vigilantly to promote its use in the synagogue. As the High Holy Days approached, every Jew felt a longing for the tunes of **בית אבא**, regardless of his ethnic background. The father's nusach had the mysterious power to change the life of the estranged

Max Sporte. Farkash taught his son to read from the Torah in the same nusach that he was taught as a young man. Ezra Siman Tov absorbed every nuance of prayer as performed by his father. The narrator sat next to his grandfather and learned to pray in exactly the same style.

18.8 Teaching a Trade

The father's obligation of teaching the son a trade is mentioned in numerous passages in the four works. Fathers often encouraged their sons to continue the family line of business. Professors and rabbis encouraged their sons to follow in their footsteps. Some fathers were careful to give their sons an advantage over the other workers by keeping secret certain aspects of the trade, as in גלגל חוזר בעולם. The jeweler Ezra Farchi trained the orphans in every aspect of the business, yet gem setting was reserved for his sons. Farkash's father died when he was six. He was not able to train his son in a trade. Farkash's mother sent him off to an apprenticeship by the baker, fulfilling the obligation of the father herself.

The four works span the period of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In these stories, a shift can be detected in the father's role in preparing the sons for life. In the earlier generations, the father was personally involved in teaching the son a trade or business. With the onset of modernity, schools began to assume the role of the father in general education and in career training. The children began to seek employment based on their personal interests, rather than the father's experience. As new careers evolved, fathers fell out of step with the new modes of work, making the option of teaching the son a trade almost obsolete. Ezra Siman Tov is an example of a man who could not keep up with the leaps of progress taking place in society. He was not equipped to assist his children in their transition to adult life. In place of personally training their sons, the tradition allows for the fathers to pay the child's school fees to dispel their obligation.

18.9 Redeeming of the First Born Son

There were no references to this commandment in the four works.

18.10 Swimming

The four works did not deal with this aspect of fathering.

18.11 In Conclusion

This research showed that, according to the traditional sources, Jewish fathering carries many responsibilities. Beyond the six specific modes of behavior articulated in the sources, the Jewish father is expected to lead a highly moral and ethical life. Stability, consistency, and loyalty make up the foundation of the Jewish home. The Jewish father must strive for truth and righteousness in every facet of life. He is a role model for his children, and the more pristine his nature and character, the greater impact he will have on their upbringing.

The observant Jewish father has many opportunities to interact with his children. Due to the routine nature of the traditional lifestyle, the restriction of travel on Sabbath and Holidays, and the hyper-focus on the religious education of the children, the father is more present and available in the home sphere. The presence of the father provides a sense of security and confidence. This presence is felt by the children throughout their lives, even after the father's demise.

The father is a source of knowledge and inspiration. The children learn to follow the tradition according to his family customs. The tunes of the father's ancestry, the specific manner in which he performs rituals, the expressions he repeatedly uses in his speech, all become part of the repertoire of the children as they grow. The children become a link in a long chain of tradition, passed down from generation to generation.

With continuity as a main objective, the tradition encourages the Jewish man to marry and produce children. The Torah obligates the minimum of two children, one male and one female, while the Rabbis extend this obligation to the production of as many offspring possible. Even in modern times, it is still common for traditional families to raise large families.

Producing children is only half of the goal. The father is responsible for training the children in the tenets and practice of the tradition. Torah education for the children is foremost in the mind of every observant parent. The father strives to raise his children for a life of scholarship, communal involvement, and self-sustainability. This demands the father to be available and actively involved in the child's upbringing.

These two goals, the physical raising of the children, and the induction of the children into a life of scholarship and spiritual pursuit, played a central role in each of the works of Rabbi Haim Sabato. The Jewish fathers portrayed in the stories were devoted to the continuity of the tradition. They monitored their children's Torah studies closely, and encouraged them to marry at the appropriate age. The grandfathers also played an important role in the training of the children, and the cycle continued. Due to the strict adherence of the characters to the tradition, the stories provided authentic, real life examples of the intended role of the father according to the spirit of the tradition.

These two thrusts are so intertwined that they are used as a common theme in many prayers and meditations. One of these prayers is recited daily prior to the study of Torah.

ברוך אתה ה' אלהינו מלך העולם אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו לעסוק בדברי תורה :
והערב נא ה' אלהינו את דברי תורתך בפינו ובפיות עמך בית ישראל. ונהיה אנחנו
וצאצאינו וצאצאי צאצאינו וצאצאי עמך בית ישראל. כלנו יודעי שמך ולומדי תורתך
לשמה :

ברוך אתה ה' המלמד תורה לעמו ישראל :

ברוך אתה ה' א-להינו מלך העולם. אשר בחר בנו מכל העמים ונתן לנו את תורתו :

ברוך אתה ה' נתן התורה: ²⁹¹

This prayer is referred to as the blessings on the Torah. It is recited daily before the morning prayers. The first paragraph is considered a request of permission to study the Torah. The second paragraph is a plea that God should help us appreciate the sweetness of the Torah, and the wish that our children, and children's children, will all become knowledgeable in the wisdom of God. The third paragraph is a blessing of thanksgiving for God's giving us the Torah.

The second paragraph places the two themes together seamlessly. Continuity of the tradition must remain for all generations to come. The word used for offspring is צאצא. This word appears four times in the same line to emphasize the importance of having children and grandchildren who will eventually grow to study Torah. This prayer, recited each morning, is designed to heighten the awareness of this dual goal.

Another prayer that displays this dual focus was written by the Shelah Hakadosh, Rabbi Isaiah Horwitz of Prague, in the seventeenth century. This meditation for raising children for Torah scholarship is recited once a year on the eve of the month of Sivan, seven days before the holiday of Shavuot.

אתה הוא ה' אלוקינו עד שלא בראת העולם, ואתה הוא אלוקינו משבראת העולם, ומעולם ועד עולם אתה א-ל. ובראת עולמך בגין לאשתמוע אלקותך [=כדי שתפורסם מלכותך] באמצעות תורתך הקדושה כמו שאמרו רבותינו זכרונם לברכה. "בראשית", בשביל תורה ובשביל ישראל, כי הם עמך ונחלתך אשר בחרת בהם מכל האמות, ונתת להם תורתך הקדושה, וקרבבתם לשמך הגדול. ועל קיום העולם ועל קיום התורה בא לנו ממך ה' אלוקינו שני צווים. כתבת בתורתך "פרו ורבו", וכתבת בתורתך "ולמדתם אותם את בניכם", והפונה בשתייהן אהת, כי לא לתהו בראת כי אם לשבת, ולכבודך בראת, יצרת אף עשית, כדי שנהיה אנחנו וצאצאינו וצאצאי כל עמך בית ישראל יודעי שמך ולומדי תורתך.

²⁹¹ Babylonian Talmud, Berachot 21A.

ובכן אבוא אליך ה' מלך מלכי המלכים, ואפיל תחנתי, ועיני לך תלויות עד שתחנני
 ותשמע תפילתי להזמין לי בנים ובנות, וגם הם יפרו וירבו הם ובניהם ובני בניהם עד
 סוף כל הדורות לתכלית שהם ואני ואנחנו בלנו יעסקו בתורתך הקדושה ללמוד
 וללמד לשמר ולעשות ולקיים את כל דברי תלמוד תורתך באהבה, והאר עינינו
 בתורתך ודבק לבנו במצוותיך לאהבה וליראה את שמך. אבינו אב הרחמן, תן לכלנו
 חיים ארזים וברוכים, מי כמוך אב הרחמים זוכר יצוריו לחיים ברחמים, זכרנו
 לחיים נחיים כמו שהתפלל אברהם אבינו "לו יחיה לפניך", ופרשו רבותינו זכרונם
 לברכה, "ביראתך". כי על כן, באתי לבקש ולחנן מלפניך שיהא זרעי וזרע זרעי עד
 עולם זרע פשר, ואל ימצא בי ובזרעי ובזרע זרעי עד עולם שום פסול ושמץ, אף שלום
 ואמת וטוב וישר בעיני אלוקים ובעיני אדם, ויהיו בעלי תורה, מארי מקרא, מארי
 משנה, מארי תלמוד, מארי רזא, מארי מצוה, מארי גומלי חסדים, מארי מדות
 תרומיות, ויעבדוך באהבה וביראה פנימית, ולא יראה חיצונית. ותן לכל גויה וגויה
 מהם די מחסורה בכבוד, ותן להם בריאות וכבוד וחסד, ותן להם קומה ויפי וחסד,
 ויהיה אהבה ואחווה ושלום ביניהם, ותזמין להם זווגים הגונים מזרע תלמידי חכמים
 מזרע צדיקים, וגם הם זווגים יהיו כמותם ככל אשר התפללתי עליהם, כי זכרון אהד
 עולה לכאן ולכאן. אתה ה' יודע כל תעלומות, ולפניך נגלו מצפוני לבי, כי כונתי בכל
 אלה למען שמך הגדול והקדוש ולמען תורתך הקדושה. על כן ענני ה' ענני בעבור
 האבות הקדושים אברהם יצחק ויעקב, ובגללם תושיע בנים להיות הענפים דומים
 לשרשם, ובעבור דוד עבדך רגל רביעי במרכבה, המשורר ברוח קדשך.

שיר המעלות אשרי כל ירא ה' החלף בדרךיו. יגיע כפיד כי תאכל אשריך וטוב לך.
 אשתך כגפן פריה בנרתי ביתך בניך כשתלי זיתים סביב לשלחנך. הנה כי כן בברך
 גבר ירא ה'. בברך ה' מציון וראה בטיב רושלים כל מי חיד. וראה בנים לבניך
 שלום על ישראל.

אָנָּה ה' שומע תפלה, יקיים בנו הפסוק. ואני זאת בריתי אותם אמר ה' רוחי אשר
 עליך ודברי אשר שמתי בפיד לא ימושו מפיד ומפי זרעך ומפי זרעך אמר ה'
 מעתה ועד עולם. יהיו לרצון אמרי פי והגיון לבי לפניך ה' צורי וגואלי:²⁹²

In this meditation, the author describes the two commandments that are the driving forces behind everything a Jew does in this world: to procreate and to teach his children the Torah. This prayer continues to beseech God for the ability to have children, something not to be taken for granted, and the wisdom to train the children to study Torah with love and devotion. Since the goal is continuity, the prayer includes a request for assistance to find

²⁹² Rabbi Isaiah Horwitz, AKA the Shelah Hakadosh, 1565–1630, Prague.

appropriate spouses for the children. The prayer concludes with a verse stating that the words of the Torah should never cease from "...my lips, the lips of my children, and the lips of my grandchildren, forever until eternity."²⁹³

This prayer is in sync with the attitudes and behavior of the fathers in the works of Sabato.

I began this research with a story from Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks. He shared the frustration of the vicar when trying to teach the children in the local parish about G-d the Father. The children could not understand the lessons because the term *father* was foreign to them. This witty anecdote from the 1980's has become a harsh reality for more and more children over the past three decades.

On the one hand, the presence of a father in the home environment does not guarantee success in the children. Plenty of fathers have proven to be poor role models for their children, and can even be the cause of trauma in the home. However, proportionally the advantages still outweigh the disadvantages. Studies show that fatherless children may be more prone to certain physiological and psychological disorders, lower self-confidence and self-esteem. As these children mature, they may be at greater risk for school failure, teenage pregnancy, substance abuse, and criminal activity. Given the right conditions, the stable presence of the father can help the children to grow and develop properly, to learn without distraction, to build confidence, even to take risks.

As this thesis shows, in addition to the commandments expressed in the tradition regarding fathering, it is the presence and involvement of the traditional father in his children's lives that help to shape them into upstanding, effective, and constructive adults.

²⁹³ Based on Isaiah 59:21

Thus I believe that this research opens the door for studies in other faith traditions. This study, together with further studies of the fathers' role in other faiths, may benefit children developmental studies.

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