

**“Then all the peoples of the earth will see that the name of Hashem is proclaimed over you”**

## **In the Merit of Fulfilling the Mitzvah of Tefillin Shel Yad and Shel Rosh HKB”H Views All of the Mitzvos as if They Were Performed L’shma**

In this week’s parsha, parshas Ki Savo, the Torah states that the tefillin shel rosh instill fear and trepidation in all the nations of the world (Devarim 28, 10): **“ויראו כל עמי הארץ כי שם ה' נקרא עליך: ויראו מומך”** — **then all the peoples of the earth will see that the name of Hashem is proclaimed over you, and they will revere you.** Expounding on this passuk, we learn in the Gemara (Menachos 35b): **“אמר רבי אליעזר, אלו תפילין שבראש”** — **Rabbi Eliezer taught: These are the “tefillin shel rosh.”** Both the Rishonim and the Acharonim toil to explain this comment. Why, in fact, do the nations of the world specifically fear the tefillin shel rosh and not the tefillin shel yad? Before addressing this question, let us discuss several issues pertaining to the mitzvah of tefillin that deserve clarification.

1 The Gemara (Menachos 37b) teaches us that the tefillin shel yad must be placed on the upper part of the arm on the biceps and not further down, where it would be exposed. This requirement is derived from the passuk (Shemos 13, 9): **“והיה”** — **the passuk implies that it should be a sign for “you,” specifically, not for others.** This is accomplished by placing it over the biceps, where it is concealed, and not further down on the arm, where it would be exposed for everyone to see. Hence, we must endeavor to comprehend why HKB”H commanded that the tefillin shel yad should be placed in a concealed area—unlike the tefillin shel rosh, which HKB”H commanded us to wear in an exposed area.

2 We learn in the Gemara (ibid. 37a) that the tefillin shel yad should be placed on the left arm. This requirement is derived from the passuk (ibid. 16) **“והיה לך לאות על ידכה”** — **the word for “your arm” is spelled ידכה instead of the usual ירך.** Spelled

with the letter “hei” at the end, it is interpreted as referring to **יד כהה**—the weaker arm; for most people, the left arm is weaker than the right. This, too, deserves further explanation; after all, the right arm is preferred in the performance of other mitzvos; it is considered to be more important. So, why is the mitzvah of tefillin different?

3 In parshas Shoftim, it is written (Devarim 20, 8): **“ויספו השוטרים לדבר אל העם ואמרו, מי האיש הירא ורך הלבב ילך וישוב לביתו, ולא יימס את לב אחיו כלבבו”** — **the officers shall add in speaking to the people and say, “Who is the man who is fearful and fainthearted? Let him go and return to his house, and let him not melt the heart of his brothers, like his heart.”** We find the following elucidation regarding this passuk in the Mishnah (Sotah 44a): **“The man who is fearful and fainthearted refers to one who is fearful because of the sins he is guilty of.”** The Gemara explains (ibid. 44b): **“שח בין תפילה”** — **If one spoke between donning the “tefillin shel yad” and the “tefillin shel rosh,” he has committed an aveirah, and he is compelled to return from the battle ranks.** We must endeavor to explain why interrupting between donning the tefillin shel yad and shel rosh is such a grievous transgression, so much so that it necessitates returning home from the battlefield.

### **A Calf’s Hair Must Protrude from the Tefillin Shel Rosh**

We will begin to shed some light on the subject by referring to the Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 32, 44). The halachah as transmitted to Moshe at Sinai dictates that the passages of the

tefillin be bound with the hair of a kosher animal. If possible, the hair of a calf was used preferentially, to atone for the “cheit ha’eigel.” The michaber adds: **“A bit of this hair should be visible outside of the compartments (“bahtim”).** In other words, the calf’s hair used to bind the passages must protrude slightly from the housing of the tefillin shel rosh. The source for this practice as brought down by the Beis Yosef in the name of the Zohar hakadosh (Pekudei 237b) requires that a segment of the calf’s hair smaller than a piece of barley be visible outside of the casing of the tefillin in order to provide a small dose of sustenance to the forces of evil from the realm of kedushah; this will prevent them from accusing us of wrongdoing.

In truth, this idea deserves further explanation. It is apparent that whenever we are commanded to provide the klipos with sustenance from the realm of kedushah, it is solely where there is a significant likelihood that they will accuse us of wrongdoing. For example, on Yom HaKippurim, HKB”H pardons all the transgressions of the people of Yisrael. To which the Satan is likely to argue: “How can HKB”H pardon all of the sins that they committed in the entire past year in one day?” Therefore, HKB”H commanded us to send the he-goat to Azazel as a bribe, so that they would desist from presenting their allegations against us.

Similarly, we offer those external forces their due by pouring water over our fingers—“mayim acharonim”—after a meal, prior to reciting Birkas HaMazon. Thus, they won’t accuse us of eating and drinking for physical pleasure rather than l’shem Shamayim. So, with this in mind, it behooves us to explain why it is necessary to provide them with a small amount of sustenance when donning the tefillin shel rosh. Why do we suspect that they will accuse us of wrongdoing when we perform the mitzvah of tefillin more so than when performing other mitzvos?

### **“When you see this, sanctify it” —the Initial Thought**

In honor of Hashem and His Torah, I would like to present to our royal audience a novel idea regarding the mitzvah of tefillin that will address all of the issues mentioned above. We learn a wonderful principle from the immaculate teachings of the great Rabbi Moshe of Sambor (the brother of the great Rabbi of Ziditchov), zy”a, in the sefer Tefilah L’Moshe (Pekudei,

HaChodesh). In his own, sacred way, he interprets the passuk (Shemos 12, 2): **“החודש הזה לכם ראש חדשים ראשון הוא לכם לחדשי: “השנה—this month shall be for you the beginning of the months; it shall be for you the first of the months of the year.** Rashi provides the following clarification: ... החודש הזה... נתקשה משה על מולד הלכנה... והראה לו באצבע את הלכנה ברקיע, ואמר לו **“החודש הזה—Moshe was perplexed by the matter of the reappearance of the moon . . . so, HKB”H showed him with a finger, so to speak, the moon in the sky, and said to him, “See it like this and sanctify it.”**

He explains the practical significance of this comment based on what we have learned in the Gemara (Berachos 17a): **“רבי אלכסנדר ברת דמצלי אמר הכי, רבון העולמים גלוי וידוע לפניך שרצוננו לעשות רצונך, ומי מעכב, שאור שבעיסה ושעבוד מלכויות, יהי רצון לפניך שתצילנו מידם. After Rabbi Alexandri would finish davening, he would utter the following: “Master of the universe! It is apparent and known to you that it is our will to perform Your will. Who prevents us from doing so? The yeast in the dough (the yetzer hara) and the oppression of foreign regimes. May it be Your will to rescue us from their hands, so that we may again obey the laws You desire with a full heart.”** This teaches us that a Jew’s inner desire is to act in accordance with the Almighty’s will; however, when he proceeds to actually make that desire a reality, the yetzer—“the yeast in the dough”—intervenes with all of its might. It interjects misleading, inappropriate thoughts, preventing the Jew from fulfilling his inner desire to perform the mitzvah l’shma—rather than for the sake of some anticipated personal reward or honor or the like.

Accordingly, the Tefilah L’Moshe asserts that this is the meaning of the Gemara’s statement (Kiddushin 40a): **“מחשבה—He associates a good thought with an actual deed.** Man’s initial thought and desire is to fulfill Hashem’s will as completely as humanly possible. Yet, when he begins to do so, he is waylaid and foiled by the yetzer, who introduces misleading and insincere thoughts and motives into his psyche. Therefore, in His infinite mercy and kindness, HKB”H combines a person’s initial, well-intended thought to perform the mitzvah ideally with the actual performance of the mitzvah. It is considered as if he actually performed the mitzvah perfectly, because everything follows the actual beginning--the first thought and intent.

This then is the message HKB”H was conveying to Moshe: **“This month shall be for you the beginning of the months.”** Based on the elucidation of this passuk, HKB”H showed Moshe the renewal of the moon and said to him: **“See it like this and sanctify it.”** HKB”H was informing Moshe that just as the determination of every month is based on the initial appearance of a tiny speck at the beginning of the month; so, too, should every individual strive with all his might to sanctify for Hashem the first inkling of a thought, free of any ulterior motives. By doing so, he ensures that the performance of the mitzvah will follow his initial impulse, which was pure. This concludes his idea.

In this manner, we can provide a very nice interpretation of the Gemara’s statement (Pesachim 50b): **“לעולם יעסוק אדם בתורה”**—**“one should always strive to engage in Torah-study and the performance of mitzvos even if one’s intent and purpose are initially insincere or misguided—“lo l’shma”;** for, by performing mitzvos in this less than ideal manner, one will eventually come to perform mitzvos in the desired, ideal manner—**“l’shma.”** Let us explain. If a person intends to study Torah or perform a particular mitzvah, and he sees that the yetzer is assaulting him and confusing him with thoughts that are not l’shma; he should persist, nevertheless. Why? **“שמותך שלא לשמה בא לשמה”**—because HKB”H will associate his act that was performed alBeis not **“l’shma”** and combine it with his initial intent, which was l’shma. Thus, it will be viewed as if he fulfilled everything l’shma!

### The Initial Thought Emanates from the Internal Locus

To elaborate on this notion further, we will embellish it with a revelation from the world-renowned luminary, the Ba’al Shem Tov hakadosh, zy”a. He teaches us a vital principle. Every Jew in the world possesses an internal locus--a divine spark, the source of the neshamah which HKB”H planted within him. It remains forever untainted and pure — unaffected by the blemishes caused by a person’s sins and transgressions. This holds true regardless of who the person is and what his circumstances are — even, chas v’shalom, if he has committed many transgressions. This phenomenon is alluded to by the passuk (Bereishis 2, 7): **“וַיִּפַּח בְּאַפֵּינוּ נִשְׁמַת חַיִּים”**—**He blew into his nostrils the soul of life**—referring to the divine spark that resides in the innermost aspect of every Jew’s heart. The taint of iniquities and transgressions does not affect it; it remains pure and unblemished.

Based on this valuable introduction, the great Rabbi Baruch of Medzhybizh, zy”a, interprets the words of Yisrael’s sweet psalmist as follows (Tehillim 37, 10): **“ועוד מעט ואין רשע והתבוננת על”**—**“just a little longer and there will be no wicked one; you will look carefully at his place and he will not be there.”** In other words, even a Jew who has sinned to the point that he is regarded as a “rasha,” nevertheless: **“ועוד מעט”** — there remains within him a small locus within the innermost aspects of his heart; **“ואין רשע”** — where he is not considered a “rasha,” because the blemish does not reach that locus. With regards to this locus, David HaMelech beseeches Hashem: **“והתבוננת על”**—**“please examine this inner locus in the heart; “ואיננו”** — and You will see that in that particular place, he is not a “rasha,” and all of the sins he committed were only external and not from the depths of his heart.

The Yismach Yisrael (Chanukah 13) explains that of this internal locus, which is a portion of G-d from above, it is said (Vayikra 16, 16): **“השוכן אתם בתוך טומאותם”**—**that dwells with them amidst their tumah.** In other words, amidst the tumah of their iniquities and transgressions, there lies this inner locus, a portion of G-d from above, that remains totally unsullied. That is where HKB”H rests His Shechinah—**“amidst their tumah”**—in their innermost place, beyond the reach of any tumah.

The Yismach Yisrael applies this concept to the Gemara’s statement (Sanhedrin 44a): **“אף על פי שחטא ישראל הוא”**. Even the sinner, still has within the innermost aspect of his heart this Jewish locus that remains unblemished. It is for this very reason that we occasionally witness even total “reshaim” performing righteous acts and teshuvah. This surprising phenomenon is attributable to the inner locus that has not yet been tarnished; it arouses them to perform teshuvah. In the words of Chazal: **“רשעים מלאים חרטה”**—**the wicked are full of remorse.**

This then is the meaning of the Tefilah L’Moshe cited above. A Jew’s initial glimmer of a thought is perfect. For, it arises from the inner locus, which the yetzer hara has no control over. Consequently, that initial thought is pure and untainted. On the other hand, when it comes time to make that thought a reality—in speech or in actual deed—the yetzer hara intervenes, confusing him with misguided thoughts of haughtiness and the like.

Therefore, it is advisable for a person to make every effort to sanctify his initial thought to fulfill the will of Hashem, without any ulterior motives. If he does so, HKB”H will connect the deed,



which was tainted by impure, misguided thoughts, lo l'shma, with the original thought that was l'shem Shamayim. As a result, it will be considered as if he fulfilled the entire mitzvah—in thought, speech and deed—in the most ideal manner.

### The Purpose of Creation Is the Beginning-- “בראשית ברא אלקים”

It is with great pleasure that we now present the words of the Arugos HaBosem (Sazria). Based on the remarks of the Tefilah L'Moshe, he explains why HKB”H began the Torah with the passuk (Bereishis 1, 1): “בראשית ברא אלקים את השמים ואת הארץ”. Rashi points out that the passuk states that **Elokim** created and not that **Havaya** created. We know that the name Elokim is associated with “din”; whereas the name Havaya is associated with “rachamim.” Thus, the passuk indicates that the Creator initially intended to create the world based on the midah of “din.” He foresaw, however, that the world could not survive based on this strict standard. Therefore, he preferentially partnered the midah of “rachamim” with the midah of “din.” This partnership and preference for “midas harachamim” are evident in the passuk (ibid. 2, 4): “ביום עשות ה' אלקים ארץ ושמים”. Note that in this passuk both divine names are employed, but the name of “rachamim” precedes the name of “din.”

The commentaries find this perplexing. After all, HKB”H is always able to foresee the future; as it is written (Yeshayah 46, 10): “מגיד מראשית אחרית ומקדם אשר לא נעשו אמר, עצתי תקום וכל”  
“**from the beginning, I foretell the outcome; and from earlier times, what has not yet been; but I say and My plan will stand, and I will carry out My every desire.** So, how is it possible to suggest that He initially thought to create the world based on “midas hadin” and then reconsidered when he saw that the world could not survive?

Yet, based on our current discussion, we can suggest an explanation. While it is true that the yetzer introduces thoughts of self-pride in a person when he performs a mitzvah; nevertheless, a person must strive to initiate the performance of the mitzvah with the purest of intentions—solely for the sake of Hashem. For, as we have learned, that initial thought emanates from a place that is beyond the reach of the yetzer. This then is the message of the passuk: “בראשית ברא אלקים את” “בראשית ברא אלקים את”—it teaches us that the purpose of the creation of the heavens and the earth were for the sake of the “ראשית”—a person’s initial impulse to fulfill the will of Hashem in the purest, most ideal way.

Accordingly, the elucidation of the passuk makes perfect sense: **“At first, He thought to create it with the midah of ‘din.’**” From the aspect of the beginning of the fulfillment of the mitzvah—namely, the initial thought and impulse—a person is, indeed, judged based on the midah of “din.” Seeing as at the moment of the initial impulse the yetzer hara is not yet in control, therefore, HKB”H judges a person at that moment with “din.” Did the person at least attempt with all of his power to arouse his inner will, which remains untainted? Yet, when the person wishes to actually fulfill the mitzvah in deed, then HKB”H adds the midah of “chesed.” This is indicated by the passuk: **“On the day Havaya Elokim made the earth and the heavens.”** For, at that point in time, the yetzer has already intervened to prevent the person from performing the mitzvah in the ideal way, without any ulterior motives.

### Joining the Tefillin Shel Yad to the Tefillin Shel Rosh

Following this exalted line of reasoning, we will proceed to explain why HKB”H commanded us to don tefillin shel yad and tefillin shel rosh every day. Now, we learned from the Tefilah L'Moshe that HKB”H combines the less than ideal performance of the mitzvah—the lo l'shma—with the initial thought—that was l'shma. HKB”H does this on our behalf in the merit of the mitzvah of tefillin, which we perform daily. Let us explain based on what we have learned in the Gemara (Shabbas 63a):

“מאי דכתב אורך ימים בימינה בשמאלה עושר וכבוד, אלא בימינה אורך ימים איכא עושר וכבוד ליכא, אלא למיימינן בה אורך ימים איכא וכל שכן עושר וכבוד, למשמאילים בה עושר וכבוד איכא אורך ימים ליכא”

—**What is the meaning of that which is written (Mishlei 3, 16): “Length of days is in her right hand; in her left hand are wealth and honor”? But, can it truly mean that in her right hand there is length of days but there is no wealth or honor?! Rather, the passuk indicates that for those who deal with her right-handedly, there is length of days and, all the more so, wealth and honor; however, for those who deal with her left-handedly, there is only wealth and honor but not length of days.** In his second explanation, Rashi explains that those who deal with the Torah **“righthandedly”** refers to those who learn Torah l'shma; whereas those who deal with the Torah **“lefthandedly”** refers to those who learn Torah not l'shma.

We can now appreciate why HKB”H commanded us to don the tefillin shel yad on the left arm. It reminds us of all the mitzvos and good deeds that we perform with our hands, in which the yetzer hara intervenes by injecting misguided thoughts that are not l’shma—represented by the left arm. Therefore, immediately after donning the shel yad, we don the shel rosh, opposite the brain. Thus, we unite the act that was not performed l’shma with the first thought and impulse in the brain that was l’shma. This accomplishes a wonderful tikun for all of the mitzvos that were not performed l’shma—making it as if they were, indeed, performed l’shma.

This also explains very nicely why it is prohibited to interrupt between the tefillin shel yad and the tefillin shel rosh. This indicates that we must yearn to immediately connect the acts of the mitzvos that were not performed l’shma with the initial impulses in the brain that were pure, with only the will of Hashem in mind. With this intent, it will be considered as if we fulfilled all of the mitzvos l’shma.

### The Right and Left Straps of the Tefillin Unite the Lo L’shma with the L’shma

We will now present a fascinating idea! Based on what we have learned, we can delight in the fact that we have achieved a better understanding of the design of the tefillin shel rosh. Two straps emerge from its housing; one exits from the right side and encircles the right side of the head; while the other strap exits the left side and encircles the left side of the head. Then the two straps unite to form the knot of the tefillin behind the head. This differs from the tefillin shel yad which are placed only on the left arm.

As explained, the reason we don the tefillin shel rosh immediately after the shel yad, without any interruption, is to connect the act that was not l’shma with the first thought that was l’shma. Thus, even the act is viewed as being l’shma. For the same reason, we have a right and left strap on the tefillin shel rosh. They unite the act that was not l’shma—represented by the left strap—with the first impulse that was l’shma—represented by the right strap. The knot they form together symbolizes that even the left ultimately becomes l’shma.

This also enlightens us as to why the tefillin shel yad must be donned in a hidden, covered spot, in keeping with the notion of:

**“It will be a sign for you, but not a sign for others.”** The tefillin shel rosh, on the other hand, are donned in an exposed, visible spot, in keeping with the notion of: **“Then all the nations of the world will see that the name of Hashem is proclaimed upon you, and they will revere you.”** Seeing as the tefillin on the left arm symbolize the mitzvos that were not performed l’shma, it is fitting that they be concealed; for, it is not respectful to perform acts that are not l’shem Shamayim. This is alluded to by the words: **“וזהיה לך לאות”**—if you fulfill the mitzvos for your own ulterior motives and gains, such as honor--**“לך”**—it is best that you keep this to yourself and don’t reveal it to others.

In contrast, the tefillin shel rosh are donned opposite the brain to connect the act that was not performed l’shma—represented by the placement of the tefillin on the left arm—with the initial, pure intent in the brain—l’shma. This should be displayed publicly; for, the performance of mitzvos l’shma honors the Almighty. This is the implication of the passuk: **“ויראו”** **“כני שם ה' נקרא עליך”**—**כל עמי הארץ כי שם ה' נקרא עליך**—the tefillin shel rosh, which instill fear in the nations of the world, illustrate that the initial impulse to perform the mitzvos is l’shem Shamayim; hence: **“כני שם ה' נקרא עליך”**—**the name of Hashem is proclaimed over you.**

### The Hair of a Calf from the Tefillin Sustains Them

Continuing onward on this majestic path, we will now explain Rabbi Eliezer’s elucidation: **“ויראו כל עמי הארץ כי שם ה' נקרא עליך”**—**“then all the nations of the world will see that the name of Hashem is proclaimed over you, and they will revere you”**—**this is a reference to the tefillin worn on the head.** Our sacred sefarim teach us that the yetzer hara is nourished and sustained by Torah-study and the performance of mitzvos that are not l’shma. Since the thoughts of honor and pride introduced by the yetzer hara motivated the person to perform the mitzvos, it owns a portion of the Torah and mitzvos that that person performed with ulterior motives—lo l’shma. Whereas, it derives no benefit or sustenance from the Torah and mitzvos that were l’shma.

This explains very nicely the statement: If he defeated the yetzer hara by studying Torah, it is a good sign; if not, if he did not defeat the yetzer hara, it is a sign that he did not study Torah l’shma. Therefore, it is recommended that he recite Krias Shema with proper focus and intent—with kavanah—to devote himself completely to Hashem. This sincere recitation will

annul all of his innermost thoughts that are not l'shma, enabling him to study Torah l'shma and to vanquish the yetzer hara.

This also explains very nicely why all the nations of the world tremble at the sight of the tefillin shel rosh. They see two phenomena: (1) Immediately after a Jew dons his shel yad on his left arm, he dons the shel rosh opposite the brain and (2) the two straps emerging from the right and left sides of the tefillin shel rosh binding together to form a knot. Both establish an intimate connection between the mitzvos not performed l'shma and the initial thought l'shma. This fills them with fear and trepidation, because they do not derive any benefit or sustenance from Torah l'shma. This then is the implication of the passuk: "וראו כל עמי הארץ כי שם ה' נקרא עליך"—they recognize that a Jew's intent is purely for the sake of Hashem. As a consequence: "ויראו ממך"—they are in awe and fear you, because they know that they receive no sustenance from there. Hence, Rabbi Eliezer expounded appropriately that this is a reference to the tefillin shel rosh.

We now have cause to rejoice; for we can now comprehend why it is necessary to have a small piece of a calf's hair protrude from the tefillin shel rosh. We are providing the forces of evil

with a small bit of sustenance—a bribe, so to speak—so that they will not prosecute us and accuse us of wrongdoing. After all, by performing the mitzvah of tefillin in the proper sequence, we connect the acts of the mitzvos, which were not performed l'shma, with the initial impulse to perform the mitzvah, which was l'shma. As a result, the forces of tumah are left without any source of nourishment or sustenance, because even the mitzvos performed lo l'shma are transformed into mitzvos l'shma. Therefore, we suspect that those negative forces will complain that HKB"H is biased toward Yisrael. Therefore, we must bribe them specifically with a small piece of calf's hair from the tefillin shel rosh to provide them with some sustenance from the realm of kedushah, so that they won't attack us and criticize us.

In conclusion, we have learned about the amazing power of the mitzvah of tefillin. By donning the shel yad on the left arm and immediately donning the shel rosh opposite the brain, we connect the mitzvos performed lo l'shma—represented by the left arm—with our initial thought and impulse yearning to fulfill Hashem's will. In this merit, the words we read in this week's parsha will become a reality: **"Then all the nations of the world will see that the name of Hashem is proclaimed over us and they will revere us!"**

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