



**“So that Hashem’s Torah may be in your mouth”**

## **The Tefillin she Yad and Tefillin shel Rosh Sanctify a Man’s Body to Serve as a Parchment for Torah She’b’al Peh**

This week’s parsha is parshas Bo. Hence, it is fitting, and gives us great pleasure, to focus on the mitzvah of tefillin shel yad and tefillin shel rosh, which are mentioned at the end of the parsha (Shemos 13, 9): **“וְהָיָה לְךָ לְאוֹת עַל יָדְךָ וּלְזִכְרוֹן”**—**and it will be for you a sign on your hand and for a remembrance between your eyes, so that Hashem’s Torah may be in your mouth, for with a strong hand Hashem took you out of Egypt.** This passuk implies that we are able to study Torah with our mouths, orally, in the merit of the mitzvah of tefillin. Furthermore, they deduce in the Gemara (Kiddushin 35a, Makkos 11a) that the entire Torah is compared to the mitzvah of tefillin from the words: **“לְמַעַן תִּהְיֶה תּוֹרַת ה’ בְּפִיךָ”**. Hence, it behooves us to examine the deeper relationship between the mitzvah of tefillin, the entire Torah, and “yetzias Mitzrayim.”

We will begin to shed some light on the subject by introducing the profound remarks of the Rambam concerning the kedushah of tefillin. It befits every Jew to study them and review them regularly, especially prior to performing the mitzvah of donning the tefillin shel yad and shel rosh. Here is a translation of the pertinent passage (Hilchos Tefillin 4, 25):

**The sanctity of tefillin is very great. As long as a person is wearing tefillin on his head and arm, he will be humble and God-fearing and will not be drawn to frivolity or meaningless chatter. He will not contemplate evil thoughts, but rather he will focus his heart on worthwhile and righteous endeavors.**

**Therefore, one should strive to keep them on all day long—that is the proper way to perform this mitzvah. It was said of Rav, the disciple of Rabeinu Hakadosh, that he was never seen walking four cubits without Torah, or without Tzitzis, or without tefillin.**

### **The Shel Yad Aligns with the Heart and the Shel Rosh with the Brain to Sanctify the Two Sovereign Powers that Rule the Entire Body**

Where did the Rambam learn this incredible chiddush from: **As long as a person is wearing tefillin on his head and arm, he will be humble and God-fearing, etc.?** I would like to propose a straightforward explanation based on what the michaber writes in the Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 25, 5):

**When donning them, one should focus on the fact that HKB”H commanded us to place these four passages—that discuss the uniqueness of His name and the exodus from Mitzrayim—on the arm opposite the heart and on the head opposite the brain, so that we will remember the miracles and wonders that He performed on our behalf. They demonstrate His oneness and the fact that He possesses the power and dominion in the upper realms and in the lower realms to do with them as He pleases. Furthermore, we should subjugate to HKB”H the neshamah in the brain and, also, the heart, which is the main source of desires and thoughts. Thus, one will have the Creator in mind and will minimize his earthly pleasures.**

It is evident from the above that the purpose on donning the tefillin shel yad opposite the heart and the shel rosh opposite the brain is to refine and sanctify these two sovereigns that rule our bodies. This then is the lesson the Rambam is teaching us: **The sanctity of tefillin is very great. As long as a person is wearing tefillin on his head and arm, he will be humble and God-fearing.** The placement of the two types of tefillin opposite the heart and the brain is very strategic. In these locations, they make all of the desires and whims of our heart and the neshamah in our brains, and all of our senses and powers subservient to the Almighty blessed One—to serve Him and fulfill His will. In other words, the mitzvah of tefillin sanctifies all 248 limbs and 365 sinews in a man's body to cling to and attach to Hashem.

## The 21 Mentions of the Holy Name in the Tefillin shel Yad Sanctify the Heart and the 21 Mentions of the Holy Name in the Tefillin shel Rosh Sanctify the Brain

In truth, we can also suggest that the Rambam derived this profound chiddush from the following Gemara (Menachos 36b): **”חייב אדם למשמש בתפילין בכל שעה קל וחומר מציץ, ומה ציץ שאין בו אלא אזכרה אחת, אמרה תורה והיה על מצחו תמיד, שלא תסיח דעתו ממנו, תפילין שיש בהן אזכרות הרבה על אחת כמה וכמה.”** **A person is obligated to touch the tefillin constantly (while he is wearing them). This is derived from a “kal va’chomer” (an a fortiori inference) from the Tzitz (worn by the Kohen Gadol), as follows: And if with regard to the Tzitz, which has only one mention of God’s name, the Torah states (ibid. 28, 37): “And it shall be on his forehead always,” so that his attention should not be diverted from it, then with regard to tefillin, which have numerous mentions of God’s name, all the more so.**

In fact, the Rambam (ibid. 14) cites this halachah and proposes an amazing chiddush—that the kedushah of the tefillin surpasses the kedushah of the Tzitz. For, as mentioned, the name **Havaya** only appears once on the Tzitz (the words **”קדש לה”** were engraved on it), whereas the name **Havaya** appears twenty-one times in the tefillin shel yad and another twenty-one times in the tefillin shel rosh.

Based on the Rambam’s incredible chiddush—that the kedushah of the tefillin exceeds the kedushah of the Tzitz—we should be overwhelmed with fear and awe when we

consider the amazing gift that HKB”H has bestowed upon us with the mitzvah of tefillin. We are privileged to adorn ourselves daily with the tefillin shel yad and shel rosh whose kedushah surpasses that of the Tzitz worn by the Kohen Gadol on his forehead.

Let us suggest a plausible explanation as to why HKB”H gave us the mitzvah of tefillin with such an exalted level of kedushah that surpasses even the kedushah of the Tzitz. Now, the Tzitz was located on the forehead of the Kohen Gadol, who was endowed with many forms of kedushah. In their merit, he was appointed to preside over the entire congregation of Yisrael. In the words of the Rambam (Hilchos Klei HaMikdash 5, 1): **The Kohen Gadol must surpass all of his priestly brethren in beauty, power, wealth, wisdom, and appearance.** As such, it was not necessary for the Tzitz to have more than one holy name engraved on it. The tefillin, however, serve a different purpose. They are designed to sanctify average, normal people like us. To accomplish this goal, they must contain many more holy names than the Tzitz.

## The Mitzvah of Tefillin Is Related to the Mitzvah of “You shall make Me a Sanctuary”

I had a wonderful idea concerning the fact that Chazal compared the kedushah of the tefillin to the kedushah of the Tzitz and the Rambam’s assertion that the kedushah of the tefillin surpasses that of the Tzitz, because they contain numerous mentions of the sacred name rather than just one. In the sefer Mitzvas Tefillin (Chapter 1, 4), the Shela hakadosh cites a phenomenal idea taught by Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai in the Zohar hakadosh (Chaye Sarah 129a): By fulfilling the mitzvah of tefillin—donning the shel yad opposite the heart and the shel rosh opposite the brain—a Jew is able to fulfill the mitzvah of (ibid. 25, 8): **”ועשו לי מקדש ושכנתי בתוכם”—they shall make Me a sanctuary (Mikdash), so that I may dwell among them—even in galus; because he becomes a dwelling for the Shechinah like the Beis HaMikdash.**

Along these lines, we can explain the significance of the number of times the name Havaya is mentioned in the tefillin. The Rambam specifies that the name Havaya appears twenty-one times in each of the tefillin. This relates to the teaching in the Tikunei Zohar (Intro. 3b) that

these are alluded to by the phrase (ibid. 3, 14): **"אֲהִיָּה אֲשֶׁר"**—HKB"H's response when Moshe asks for His name. Now, the gematria of the word **"אֲהִיָּה"** is twenty-one. Since this name is mentioned here twice, it alludes both to the twenty-one holy names in the tefillin shel yad and the twenty-one holy names in the tefillin shel rosh.

The connection between the phrase **"אֲהִיָּה אֲשֶׁר אֲהִיָּה"** and the mitzvah of tefillin can be explained based on the following Gemara (Berachos 9b): **"אֲהִיָּה אֲשֶׁר אֲהִיָּה, אָמַר לוֹ: הִקְבֵּה לְמִשְׁחָה לְךָ אֲמֹר לָהֶם לְיִשְׂרָאֵל, אֲנִי הֵיטֵי עִמָּכֶם בְּשַׁעְבֹּד זֶה, וְאֲנִי אֲהִיָּה עִמָּכֶם בְּשַׁעְבֹּד מַלְכוּתֹת—"****"I shall be as I shall be."** HKB"H said to Moshe, **"Go and say to Yisrael, 'I was with them during the subjugation (enslavement) in Mitzrayim, and I will be with them during the subjugation of the other kingdoms.'"** In other words, the names **"אֲהִיָּה אֲשֶׁר אֲהִיָּה"** convey the fact that HKB"H rests His Shechinah upon us even in every galus.

Thus, every time we don the tefillin shel yad and shel rosh—which each contain the number of holy names equivalent to the name **"אֲהִיָּה"**—we elicit the promise HKB"H made to Moshe Rabeinu: **"אֲהִיָּה אֲשֶׁר אֲהִיָּה"**—**just as I was with you in this subjugation, so, too, will I be with you in all future subjugations.** According to Rashbi, this implies that by performing the mitzvah of tefillin, which contains forty-two mentions of the name Havaya—corresponding to **"אֲהִיָּה אֲשֶׁר אֲהִיָּה"**—Yisrael themselves become the embodiment of the Beis HaMikdash, even in galus when the Beis HaMikdash no longer exists. In other words, we are fulfilling the directive of: **"They shall make Me a Mikdash, so that I may dwell among them."**

We can now better appreciate why Chazal compared the kedushah of the tefillin to the kedushah of the Tzitz and the Rambam's assertion that Chazal meant to inform us that the kedushah of the tefillin surpasses the kedushah of the Tzitz—on account of the forty-two times **Havaya** is mentioned in them. As explained, the purpose of the mitzvah of donning tefillin is for a man himself to serve as a Beis HaMikdash—a place where HKB"H can dwell His Shechinah. Thus, just as HKB"H dwelt His Shechinah on the Kohen Gadol via the Tzitz, which had one holy name engraved on it; in the same way, HKB"H dwells His Shechinah on every man wearing tefillin on account of the forty-two names of **Havaya** they house.

This explains very nicely HKB"H's rationale for granting us the mitzvah of tefillin with their extreme kedushah. The Tzitz with its one Havaya adorned the head of the Kohen Gadol, whose status surpassed that of his brothers in most respects. The tefillin, however, were aimed at sanctifying every Jewish man, so that he would be like a mini-Beis HaMikdash. To accomplish this goal, HKB"H saw fit to endow the tefillin shel yad and shel rosh with a total of forty-two Havayas—equivalent to **"אֲהִיָּה אֲשֶׁר אֲהִיָּה"**.

Now, we can also better understand the Rambam's statement: **The sanctity of tefillin is very great. As long as a person is wearing tefillin on his head and arm, he will be humble and God-fearing.** As stated, the Rambam was of the opinion that the kedushah of the tefillin surpassed the kedushah of the Tzitz, since their purpose was to imbue every Jew with the kedushah of the Beis HaMikdash. Therefore, with the power of their forty-two names that illuminate his being, a Jew truly becomes sanctified and embodies all the attributes enumerated by the Rambam.

## Tefillin shel Yad Corresponds to Torah She'b'chsav

Following this sublime path, we will proceed to interpret the passuk in this week's parsha: **"And it will be for you a sign on your hand and for a remembrance between your eyes, so that Hashem's Torah may be in your mouth, for with a strong hand Hashem took you out of Egypt."** We will begin by clarifying which tefillin corresponds to Torah she'b'chsav and which corresponds to Torah she'b'al peh. It appears that we can prove that the shel yad corresponds to Torah she'b'chsav based on the exposition in the Gemara (Menachos 36b) that the tefillin shel yad should be donned on one's left arm. Regarding this, Rabeinu Bachayei (end of parshas Bo) writes in the name of one of the kabbalists: **The tefillin that are on the left (arm) correspond to the right, as it states (Devarim 33, 2): "From His right hand, He presented a fire of law to them."** The source for this notion is found in the Ramban's sefer HaEmunah V'HaBitachon (Chapter 22): **It is worth commenting that the rationale for donning the tefillin shel yad on the left arm is because it corresponds to the right arm of HKB"H.**



In other words, we were commanded to don the tefillin on our left arms, because HKB”H is facing us; thus, His right arm aligns with our left arm. To substantiate this claim, he cites the passuk above: **”מימינו אש דת למו”**—**from His right hand, He presented a fire of law to them.** Additionally, the Tikunei Zohar (Intro. 11b) learns from this passuk that Torah she’b’chsav was given with His right hand. Hence, we place the tefillin shel yad on the left arm, because it faces the right arm of HKB”H, so to speak, with which He gave Torah she’b’chsav.

This explains very nicely what the michaber writes concerning tefillin shel yad (O.C. 27, 8): **It is the universal custom to wind it around the forearm six or seven times.** The Magen Avraham (ibid. 13) writes in the name of the Arizal and the Shela that the minhag is to wind it around the forearm seven times. In keeping with this discussion, the reason being that Torah she’b’chsav is comprised of seven sefarim. This is based on an elucidation in the Gemara (Shabbas 115b) related to the passuk (Mishlei 9, 1): **”הצבה עמודיה שבעה, אלו שבעה ספרי תורה”**—**”She has hewn out her seven pillars,”** these represent the seven books of the Torah.

Rashi provides the following clarification. Since the two pesukim of **”ויהי בנסוע”** represent a separate book of the Torah, there are actually seven books of the Torah: (1) Sefer Bereishis, (2) Sefer Shemos, (3) Sefer Vayikra, (4) Sefer Bamidbar until **”ויהי בנסוע”**, (5) the passage of **”ויהי בנסוע”**, (6) the remainder of sefer Bamidbar after the passage of **”ויהי בנסוע”**, and (7) Sefer Devarim.

### Tefillin shel Rosh Correspond to Torah She’b’al Peh

Continuing on this sacred path, we will now provide proof that the tefillin shel rosh correspond to Torah she’b’al peh. The Chasan Sofer presents a wonderful insight regarding this passuk: **”והיה לך לאות על ירך ולזכרון בין עיניך”**. In truth, in Torah she’b’al peh, it states explicitly in each of the first two passages of Krias Shema that the tefillin shel rosh are to be placed between the eyes—(Devarim 6, 8): **”והיו לטוטפות בין עיניך”** and (ibid. 11, 18): **”והיו לטוטפות בין עיניכם”**.

Yet, our sages teach us in Torah she’b’al peh that this is not to be taken literally. They are not meant to be placed on the forehead between the eyes but rather over the brain. Here is the passage from the Gemara (Menachos 37a): **”בין עיניך זו קדקד, היכא, אמרי דבי רבי ינאי מקום שמוחו של תינוק רופס”**—**”between your eyes”** means over the fontanel, the soft spot of an infant’s skull. The reason for this is explained in the Gemara (ibid. b) as follows:

**”תנו רבנן בין עיניך זו גובה שבראש, אתה אומר זו גובה שבראש או אינו אלא בין עיניך ממש, נאמר כאן בין עיניך ונאמר להלן לא תשימו קרחה בין עיניכם למת, מה להלן בגובה שבראש מקום שעושה קרחה, אף כאן בגובה של ראש מקום שעושה קרחה.”**

The Rabbis taught in a Baraisa: **”Between your eyes,” this refers to the high part of the head. Do you say that this refers to the high part of the head, or perhaps it means literally “between your eyes”?!** It states here **”between your eyes,”** and it states further on (ibid. 14, 1; regarding a mourner): **”You shall not make a bald spot ‘between your eyes’ for the dead.”** Just as there it refers to the high part of the head, where one makes a bald spot; here, too, it refers to the high part of the head, where a bald spot is made.

Hence, it is taught in a Mishnah (Megillah 24b) that if a person places the tefillin on his forehead, he is exhibiting heresy. Rashi comments: **”שמבזין מדרש חכמים והולכין אחר המשמע, כמשמעו בין עיניך ממש... ורבותינו דרשו במנחות בגזירה שוה בין עיניך זה קדקד, מקום שמוחו של תינוק רופס”**—those who practice in this manner are following the literal translation and exhibiting contempt for the teaching of the sages. Thus, we only know the correct place to don the shel rosh, because of this teaching in Torah she’b’al peh.

In fact, this is implicit in the passuk itself: **”והיה לך לאות על ירך ולזכרון בין עיניך”**—**it will serve as a sign on your arm and as a reminder between your eyes;** however, since it is possible to misinterpret the passuk, it immediately adds the following warning: **”למען תהיה תורת ה' בפיך”**—**so that Hashem’s Torah should be in your mouth.** In other words, do not interpret the phrase **”between your eyes”** literally; rather heed that **”Hashem’s Torah be in your mouth”**—i.e., abide by the teaching in **Torah she’b’al peh,** which is learned with our mouths, that the shel rosh should align with the brain and not be placed between the eyes.

In summary, HKB”H alluded to us that if we wish to know the correct meaning of **“between your eyes”**—the proper location for donning the tefillin shel rosh—then we must reveal it in Torah she’b’al peh. This is implied by the warning: **“למען תהיה תורת ה’ בפיך”**. In keeping with this discussion, this is because the tefillin shel rosh correspond to Torah she’b’al peh.

### The Four Passages in the Tefillin Correspond to the Four Methods of Exegesis

With great pleasure, we will now suggest a rationale for housing the four passages we place in the tefillin shel rosh in four separate compartments. This is in contrast to the tefillin shel yad where we place them all in a single compartment. Now, since the tefillin shel yad correspond to Torah she’b’chsav, which was given to us by the mouth of HKB”H, Who is **One, Only, and Unequaled**, all four passages are place in **one** chamber.

Tefillin shel rosh, on the other hand, corresponds to Torah she’b’al peh, which encompasses four methods of exegesis represented by the acronym **פרד”ס**, which stands for **ב’שט ר’מוז ד’רוש ס’וד**: **“pshat”**—the simple, straightforward understanding of the text; **“remez”**—the interpretation of the text based on allusions; **“drush”**—understanding based on more intricate elucidations; **“sod”**—mystical interpretations of the text based on concealed meanings. Therefore, we were instructed to house the four passages we place in the shel rosh in four separate compartments. This signifies that a Jew must strive to use the intellect in his brain to attain and comprehend all of the various explanations of Torah she’b’al peh employed to interpret Torah she’b’chsav via the methodologies of **פרד”ס**. For, each of the four methods is unique in its own way.

This is also the rationale for the order of donning the two types of tefillin as explained in the Gemara (Menachos 36a): **“כשהוא מניח, מניח של יד ואחר כך מניח של ראש, דכתיב וקשרתם”**. **When he puts them on, he puts on the “shel yad” first and then puts on the “shel rosh”**; for, it is written (ibid. 6, 8): **“And bind them as a sign upon your arm,” and subsequently: “and let them be totafos (tefillin) between your eyes.”** This mirrors the order in which HKB”H gave us the Torah. He revealed Torah she’b’chsav to us first and subsequently

revealed Torah she’b’al peh to us via the Torah scholars in every, single generation. In parallel fashion, we don the tefillin shel yad first, since it corresponds to Torah she’b’chsav; and only afterwards do we don the shel rosh, which corresponds to Torah she’b’al peh.

### Reconciling the Somewhat Misleading Directive of **“בין עיניך”**

Proceeding along this enchanting path, we will now reconcile the fact that HKB”H instructed that the shel rosh be placed **“between your eyes.”** Yet, as we learned above, anyone who does so is considered a heretic. So, why, indeed, does the Torah specify to don them **“בין עיניך”**?

To answer this question, we will refer to a teaching in the Gemara (Gittin 60b): **אמר רבי יוחנן, לא כרת הקב”ה ברית עם ישראל: אלא בשביל דברים שבעל פה, שנאמר כי על פי הדברים האלה כרתי אתך ברית**. **Rabbi Yochanan said: HKB”H only entered into a covenant with Yisrael on account of the Oral Law, as it states (Shemos 34, 27): “For on account of these words have I entered a covenant with you and with Yisrael.”** In Tiferes Yisrael (Chapter 68), the Maharal of Prague explains—as understood by the brilliant author of the Ketzer HaChoshen, ztz”l, in Shev Shematita (Introduction)—that just like Torah she’b’chsav must be written on a **“klaf”** (parchment); so, too, Torah she’b’al peh must be written on some sort of **“klaf”**—namely, the mouth of the scholar who engages in the study of Torah she’b’al peh.

Now, from a sefer-Torah inscribed on a parchment prepared from an animal’s hide, the covenant and unique bond that exists between Yisrael and their Heavenly Father is not so apparent. From Torah she’b’al peh, however, that was given to Yisrael to be studied and transmitted orally, this relationship is ever so apparent. When a Jew’s mouth becomes so pure and refined that it serves as a **“klaf”** for Torah she’b’al peh, the covenant and intimate relationship that exists between Yisrael and HKB”H becomes ever so apparent! This is the message conveyed by Rabbi Yochanan: **“HKB”H only entered into a covenant with Yisrael on account of the Oral Law.”**

Based on this, the Shev Shematita goes on to address a statement by Rashbi in the Yerushalmi (Berachos 1, 2): **“אילו הוינא על טורא דסיני בשעתא דאתיהבת תורה לישראל, הוינא**

מתבכי קומי דרחמנא דיתברי לבר נש תרין פומין, חד דהוה לעי באורייתא וחד דעבד ליה כל צורכיה. **Had I been on Har Sinai when the Torah was given to Yisrael, I would have pleaded with HKB"H to create man with two mouths—one to engage in the study of Torah and one to perform all of his personal needs.**

Let us elaborate. The “klaf” upon which a sefer-Torah is written must be prepared and processed l’shma, as the halachah dictates (O.C. 32, 8). Similarly, a Jew’s mouth, which becomes the “klaf” of Torah she’b’al peh, should be guarded and prepared l’shma, for the sake of the kedushah of the Torah. This prompted Rashbi to request that a Jew be equipped with a special mouth exclusively for studying Torah; thus, he would not diminish the kedushah of the “klaf” of Torah she’b’al peh by speaking frivolous, improper things

We now have cause to rejoice. For, this enlightens us as to why HKB"H always emphasizes in the Torah that the tefillin shel rosh should be worn **“בין עיניך”**. He meant to impress upon us that the purpose of the “shel yad” opposite

the heart and the “shel rosh” opposite the brain, with their forty-two mentions of the holy name, is to sanctify the body’s two sovereign powers—the heart and the brain. Thus, the entire body is sanctified with the kedushah of the “klaf” of Torah she’b’al peh.

Now, in the berachah preceding Krias Shema, we pray: **“והאר עינינו בתורתך”—enlighten our eyes with Your Torah.** This implies that the strenuous effort and understanding associated with the study of Torah she’b’al peh involve seeing and perceiving with the “eyes” of the intellect. This then is the meaning of the passuk: **“והיה לך לאות על ידכה ולזכרון—בין עיניך—and it will be for you a sign on your hand and for a remembrance between your eyes.** Then, the passuk goes on to clarify what is meant by “between your eyes”: **“So that Hashem’s Torah may be in your mouth”—**that you should use your mouth to study Torah she’b’al peh to reveal the true intent of **“בין עיניך”**. Furthermore, with these words, the Torah is informing us that in the merit of donning the tefillin shel yad and shel rosh, a Jew’s mouth and body are transformed into a “klaf” illuminated by Torah she’b’al peh.



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