



**“All the peoples of the earth will see that the name of Hashem
is proclaimed over you, and they will revere you”**

The Tefillin shel-yad Subjugates the Yetzer HaRa then the Tefillin shel-rosh Transforms It into a Yetzer Tov

This week's parsha is parshas Ki Savo. We will focus on the exalted aspects of the kedushah of the tefillin shel-rosh. They expounded in the Gemara (Berachos 6a, Menachos 35b) on the following passuk in our parsha (Devarim 28, 10): **“ויראו כל עמי הארץ כי שם ה' נקרא עליך ויראו ממך, תניא רבי אליעזר: 'Then all the peoples of the earth will see that the name of Hashem is proclaimed over you, and they will be in awe of you (fear you).'** **Rabbi Eliezer the Great says: These awe-inspiring objects are the tefillin worn on the head.** Where does Rabbi Eliezer the Great find an allusion in this passuk to the tefillin shel-rosh?

We find a plausible explanation in the commentary of the Ba'al HaTurim: **The first letters of ש"ם י"י נקרא spell ש"ן, referring to the “shin” of the tefillin (shel-rosh).** This is a reference to the statement in the Gemara (Menachos 35a): **“ש"ן של תפילין הלכה למשה מסיני”**—**the letter “shin” of the tefillin (shel-rosh) is mandated by a halachah given to Moshe at Sinai.** This means that the leather of the outer surface of the housing of the tefillin shel-rosh must be creased to form a raised letter **“shin.”** This is also mentioned in the commentary of Rabeinu Bachaye; he instructs us to read the passuk **as if it says: “And all the peoples of the earth will see that the “shin” is on you, and they will be in awe of you (fear you).**

So, what is so special about the **“shin”** embossed on the tefillin shel-rosh that it provokes the fear and awe of the nations of the world? It is apparent from the passuk that the fear of the other nations is provoked both by the name **Havaya** that shines on us and the letter **“shin.”** Hence,

we must endeavor to explain the connection between the name **Havaya** and the letter **“shin”**—alluded to by the first letters of the words **“ש"ם י"י נקרא”**.

Regarding the letter **“shin,”** it is worth mentioning what the Tosafos write (Menachos 35a) in the name of the Shimushah Rabbah. The **“shin”** embossed on the right side of the shel-rosh has the familiar three extensions; in contrast, the **“shin”** on its left side is embossed with four extensions. This is in fact consistent with the ruling in the Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 32, 42). We will endeavor to explain this matter.

Additionally, we must reconcile a discrepancy regarding the correct placement of the tefillin shel-rosh. According to the Gemara (ibid. 37a), it should be placed on top of the head over the brain. Yet, the Torah always emphasizes that they should be placed **“בין עיניך”**—**between your eyes.** For example (Shemos 13, 9): **“והיה לך לאות על ירך ולזכרון בין עיניך”**—**and it will be for you a sign on your hand and for a remembrance between your eyes.** Also, in the passage of Krias Shema, it says (Devarim 6, 8): **“וקשרתם לאות על ירך”**—**bind them as a sign upon your arm and let them be totafos (tefillin) between your eyes.**

A Fantastic Insight from the Chasam Sofer

We will begin to shed some light on the subject by introducing a fascinating insight from the Chasam Sofer, zy”a, (end of sefer Devarim, Likutim). We are taught in the Gemara (ibid. 36a): **“כשהוא מניח, מניח של יד ואחר כך מניח של ראש,”** **When he puts them on, he puts on the “shel-yad” first and then**

puts on the “shel-rosh”; for, it is written: “And bind them as a sign upon your arm,” and subsequently: “and let them be totafos between your eyes.” Here is a loose translation of his sacred words:

The practice of first placing the “shel-yad” opposite the heart and reciting the berachah “I’haniach” followed by donning the “shel-rosh” and reciting the berachah “ahl mitzvas”—indicating that it is the completion of the mitzvah—can be explained based on an analogy: The people of a particular province wanted to appoint a king over themselves. He (the king-to-be) said to them, “First, restrain so-and-so who opposes the kingship in shackles and then delegate me to be your king.”

Here, too, reshaim are controlled by their hearts and follow its evil impulses. The hearts of zaddikim, on the other hand, are controlled by their intellect and their neshamos. Therefore, before placing the tefillin as a crown over the brain to sanctify it as a Holy of Holies, it is necessary to constrain the one objecting to the kingship in shackles—namely, the heart. Therefore, we must first place tefillin opposite the heart to bind it with restraints of kedushah; then, after that, we finish the mitzvah by placing the “shel-rosh” on top of the brain.

We will now expand on his sacred insight based on an exposition in the Midrash (Bamidbar Rabbah 22, 9) in relation to the passuk (Koheles 10, 2): **“לב חכם לימינו ולב כסיל לשמאלו, זה יצר טוב שהוא נתון בימינו, ולב כסיל לשמאלו, זה יצר הרע שנתון בשמאלו.”** “The heart of a wise man is to his right; while the heart of a fool is to his left.” “The heart of a wise man is to his right,” refers to the yetzer tov, which has been placed on his right side, while “the heart of a fool is on his left,” refers to the yetzer hara, which has been placed on his left. This, in fact, is the source for what the author of the Tanya teaches in Likutei Amarim (Chapter 9): The yetzer tov resides in the right cavity of the heart, whereas the yetzer hara resides in the left cavity of the heart. It is imperative to have the yetzer tov on the right overcome the yetzer hara on the left.

This then is what the Chasam Sofer is teaching us. First, it is necessary to don the “tefillin shel-yad” on the left arm, opposite the left side of the heart, to constrain the

yetzer hara dwelling in the left cavity of the heart with the kedushah of the tefillin. For, it attempts to fill our hearts with improper desires and opposes the sovereignty of HKB”H. Afterwards, we don the “tefillin shel-rosh” opposite the brain to accept the sovereignty of HKB”H.

Let us add a precious point. It is for this reason that we wrap the “tefillin shel-yad” on the left arm with the right hand, which is opposite the right side of the heart, where the yetzer hatov dwells. Thus, we perform a symbolic act demonstrating the subjugation of the left-sided yetzer hara by the hand of the right-sided yetzer hatov, preventing it from controlling a person by entrapping him in its treacherous net.

This explains very nicely our minhag—brought down by the Magen Avraham (O.C. 25, 18) in the name of the Arizal—to wrap the straps of the “shel-yad” around the forearm seven times prior to donning the “tefillin shel-rosh.” This coincides magnificently with the teaching in the Gemara (Succah 52a): **“שבעה שמות יש לו ליצר הרע”—the yetzer hara has seven appellations.** The Maharsha (ibid.) explains that these refer to the seven distinct forces of the yetzer hara corresponding to the seven midos. For this reason, when we don the “tefillin shel-yad” opposite the left side of the heart—to shackle and constrain the yetzer hara—we wrap the strap of kedushah around the arm seven times to constrain the yetzer’s seven forces of tumah under the control of the right-sided yetzer tov.

”וייצר ה' אלקים את האדם”

G-d Formed Man with Two Eyes and a Nose Shaped Like the Letters וי

As a loyal servant in the presence of his master, I will latch onto his coattails and add a spicy tidbit to his sacred insight. He taught us that after we have effectively bound the yetzer hara—the foremost rebel against HKB”H—with the straps of the tefillin shel-yad, we immediately coronate HKB”H as our king by donning the tefillin shel-rosh. Let us refer to the passuk (Bereishis 2, 7): **”וייצר ה' אלקים את האדם—עפר מן האדמה ויפח באפיו נשמת חיים ויהי האדם לנפש חיה”—and Hashem Elokim formed man of soil from the earth and blew into his nostrils the soul of life; and man became a living soul.**

The Zohar hakadosh (Bereishis 26a) reveals the deeper meaning conveyed by the passuk. **”וַיִּצַר ה' אֱלֹקִים אֶת הָאָדָם”**— **this refers to Yisrael.** The term **וַיִּצַר** is interpreted as the anagram **וַיִּצַר**, indicating that HKB”H **drew** the letters **וַיִּצַר** on the face of a Jew. Man’s two eyes resemble **“yud”s**, and the nose in between them resembles the letter **“vav.”** The gematria of these three letters (26) equals the gematria of the blessed name **Havaya.**

First of all, the claim of the Zohar hakadosh requires clarification. For, it implies that only Jews were created with these three letters drawn on their faces. This is problematic, since obviously every human being, even a goy, is born with two eyes and a nose. Thus, it would seem that even non-Jews have the shapes of the three letters **וַיִּצַר** drawn on their faces. So, how can the Zohar hakadosh teach that this applies uniquely to the people of Yisrael?

The Name Havaya Is Only Drawn on the Face of a Jew

In the sefer Ohr Malei (Shemos), the esteemed Rabbi of Kassin, ztz”l, brings down in the name of the great Rabbi Moshe Osterhir, that he was asked about that which Rabeinu Chaim Vital, ztz”l, writes in Sha’ar HaYichudim. He writes that the human form alludes to the name Havaya; the two eyes represent two “yud”s (20); the nose is shaped like a “vav” (6); their sum equals the name Havaya (26). Similarly, he writes that the other bodily limbs allude to other sacred names. This begs the following question. Goyim possess the same physical characteristics and build as a Jew. That being the case, their bodies also allude to the name Havaya.

He responded based on the following halachic ruling in the Shulchan Aruch (O.C. Hilchos Tefillin 32, 4): **”צריך—שלא תדבק שום אות בחברתה, אלא כל אות תהיה מוקפת גויל”**—**it is imperative that no letter (in a sefer Torah) touch its neighboring letter; rather, every letter must be surrounded by blank parchment.** In other words, any letter that is not surrounded by blank parchment is invalid (not kosher).

This alludes to the fact that a Jew’s bodily limbs, which resemble letters, must be surrounded by a sort of parchment. In other words, a Jew must establish boundaries and limits; he must not use his limbs to perform acts that violate the Torah’s precepts. For instance, a Jew must take care that his eyes not gaze upon prohibited sights, that his ears not hear “lashon hara” and nonsensical prattle, that his own mouth not speak “lashon hara” and nonsense; the same applies to the other bodily limbs.

Thus, a Jew’s limbs—surrounded by a sort of parchment, ensuring that they only perform acts sanctioned by the Torah—resemble letters. His two eyes resemble two “yud”s; his nose resembles the letter “vav.” The goyim, however, who do not impose these boundaries and limits upon their limbs, seeing as they engage in all sorts of prohibited, unrestricted behaviors, their limbs do not have the status of letters. On the contrary, they are compared to animals.

The Ohr Malei applies this notion to interpret the passuk (Shemos 1, 1): **”וְאֵלֶּה שְׁמוֹת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הַבָּאִים מִצְרַיִם”**—**and these are the names of Bnei Yisrael who came to Mitzrayim.** In other words, **Bnei Yisrael** depict the sacred **“names”** of HKB”H which are imprinted upon their faces and their bodily limbs. To dispel the notion that this applies to the goyim, as well, since they seem to possess the same physical characteristics, the Torah adds the following pertinent fact: **”הַבָּאִים מִצְרַיִם”**. This implies that the limbs of the people of Yisrael are surrounded by limits and boundaries (**“meitzarim”**). They ensure that Jews will not utilize their limbs for prohibited acts and behaviors. As such, they possess the status of letters surrounded by parchment with the name Havaya sketched on their faces. Goyim, on the other hand, who are not bound by such limitations and restrictions, lack the kedushah of the letters. This concludes his sacred remarks.

The Purpose of Donning Tefillin shel-rosh Is to Transform the Yetzer HaRa into a Yetzer Tov

Following this sublime path, we will now elaborate on the significance of HKB”H drawing two **“yud”s**—two eyes—and a **“vav”**—a nose—on a Jew’s countenance. We will refer to what we have learned in the Gemara (Berachos

מאי דכתיב וייצר ה' אלקים את האדם בשני יודי"ן, שני יצרים ברא: 61a) In the Torah's description of the creation of man, the word "וייצר"—and He formed—is spelled with two "yud"s, indicating that HKB"H created man with two yetzers—one good inclination and one bad inclination.

Now, we presented above the exposition in the Midrash: "The heart of a wise man is to his right," refers to the yetzer tov, which has been placed on his right side, while "the heart of a fool is on his left," refers to the yetzer hara, which has been placed on his left. Notwithstanding, even though the heart of a "chacham" is to his right, his ultimate goal is to transform even the yetzer hara into a force for good and to serve Hashem with both yetzers. As we are taught in the Mishnah (ibid. 54a): "ואהבת את ה' אלקיך בכל לבבך וגו', בשני יצריך ביצר טוב וביצר הרע"—"you shall love Hashem, your G-d, with all of your heart," with your two yetzers, the yetzer tov and the yetzer hara.

This accords with what we have learned in the Yerushalmi (Sotah 5, 5): "אברהם עשה יצר רע טוב, ומאי טעמא ומצאת את לבבו: Avraham made the yetzer hara good. What is the reason for this conclusion? It says (Nechemiah 9, 8): "And You found his heart (completely) loyal to You." Here is the interpretation of the Korban HaEidah: Even activities involving physical needs and desire—such as eating and drinking and the like—Avraham performed them solely for the sake of his love of G-d, and not for his own personal pleasure, as it says: "And You found his heart (completely) loyal to You." For, he had a single, unified heart; even the evil side of his heart was totally devoted to Hashem.

This enlightens us as to why HKB"H drew two "yud"s and a "vav" on a Jew's countenance, as indicated by the term "וייצר", which the Zohar hakadosh interprets as יו"י. This teaches us that man's ultimate purpose is to transform the yetzer hara into a force for good. Thus, the right eye (resembling a "yud") alludes to the right-sided yetzer tov, and the left eye (also resembling a "yud") alludes to the left-sided yetzer hara. Meanwhile, the nose located between them (resembling a "vav") alludes to the principle (Pesachim 5a): "וי"ו מוסיף על ענין ראשון"—the letter

"vav" adds to the previous subject. In other words, the "vav" connects the left-sided yetzer hara with the right-sided yetzer tov, so that ultimately they will both be good inclinations with which a Jew can serve Hashem.

Based on what we have learned, we can explain very nicely why HKB"H alluded to His name with man's two eyes and nose—shaped like the letters יו"י whose gematria equals Havaya. It says in the Gemara (Kiddushin 30b): "יצרו של אדם—מתגבר עליו בכל יום... ואלמלא הקב"ה עוזרו אין יכול לו"—man's yetzer overwhelms him every day and attempts to kill him . . . and if HKB"H did not help him, he would be unable to withstand it. This suggests that it is impossible to overcome the yetzer hara and even less likely to transform it into a force for good without Hashem's assistance. To convey this reality, HKB"H drew the letters יו"י whose gematria equals Havaya on a Jew's countenance.

On Motza'ei Shabbas We Join the Eyes and the Nose

Based on what we have discussed, we can provide a rationale for the established Jewish minhag to recite berachos on Motza'ei Shabbas Kodesh over spices and fire. We will begin with a passage in the Midrash (B.R. 11, 2): "ויברך אלקים את יום השביעי ויקדש אותו"—G-d blessed the seventh day, and He sanctified it": He blessed it with the light of man's countenance; He sanctified it with the light of man's countenance. For the light of man's countenance all the days of the week is not the same as it is on Shabbas. This is because on Shabbas Kodesh, it is possible to transform the yetzer hara into a good yetzer.

We can deduce this from a teaching in the Gemara (Shabbas 119b): "שני מלאכי השרת מלוין לו לאדם בערב שבת מבית הכנסת לביתו, אחד טוב ואחד רע, וכשבא לביתו ומצא נר דלוק ושלחן ערוך ומיטתו מוצעת, מלאך טוב אומר יהי רצון שתהא לשבת אחרת כך, ומלאך רע עונה אמן בעל כרחו." Two ministering angels accompany a person from the Beis Kenesses to his home on erev Shabbas—a good one and a bad one. When he arrives home and finds a candle lit, the table set and his bed arranged, the good angel says: "It should be His will that it should be so on another Shabbas." The bad angel is forced to answer: "Amen."

The Mateh Moshe writes (Amud HaAvodah 435) that the bad angel that accompanies a Jew home on erev Shabbas is the “samech-mem”—the guardian angel of Eisav. Thus, we learn that with the kedushah of Shabbas a Jew is able to transform the yetzer hara into a good angel. This then is the meaning of the Midrash: **“וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹקִים אֶת יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי וַיְקַדֵּשׁ”**—**“אֹתוֹ, בְּרָכּוֹ בְּאוֹר פָּנָיו שֶׁל אָדָם, קִדְּשׁוֹ בְּאוֹר פָּנָיו שֶׁל אָדָם”**—on Shabbas, the three letter **יו”י** represented by a Jew’s two eyes and nose are illuminated; this enables him to connect the two **“yud”s**—i.e., the yetzer tov and yetzer hara—by means of the connecting **“vav”** in between them.

Now, the ideal is for a Jew to extend the kedushah of Shabbas, so that he can also accomplish this transformative feat during the week. Thus, he will fulfill the mitzvah of **“you shall love Hashem, your G-d, with all of your heart,” with your two yetzers, the yetzer tov and the yetzer hara** all week long. Therefore, on Motza’ei Shabbas, when we recite Havdalah and separate between the kedushah of Shabbas and the six days of the week, we recite berachos both over the “besamim”—which we smell with our noses—and over the fire—which we gaze upon with our two eyes. In this manner, we unite the letters **יו”י** in preparation for the six weekdays to unite the two yetzers to work together as forces of good to serve Hashem throughout the week.

The Right “Shin” Symbolizes the Yetzer Tov the Left “Shin” Symbolizes the Yetzer HaRa

We will continue to elaborate on the insight of the Chasam Sofer, zy”a. Once again, he teaches us that we initially don the tefillin shel-yad on the left arm opposite the left cavity of the heart to begin the mitzvah by subjugating the yetzer hara, the formidable rebel who dwells there. Subsequently, in keeping with the notion of **“מַעֲלִין בְּקֹדֶשׁ”**—**ascending in kedushah**—we don the tefillin shel-rosh to accomplish the lofty feat of transforming the yetzer hara into a yetzer tov.

This incredible process is alluded to by the halachah transmitted to Moshe at Sinai to emboss the letter **“shin”** on both sides of the tefillin shel-rosh. For, the gematria of the letter **“shin”** (300) is the gematria of the word **יצ”ר**

(10+90+200) . Since the yetzer tov occupies the right side of the heart and the yetzer hara occupies its left side, we were commanded to emboss a **“shin”** on the right side symbolizing the **יצ”ר** tov and a **“shin”** on the left side symbolizing the **יצ”ר** hara.

This also explains why the left-sided **“shin”** must have four extensions. As explained, it symbolizes the yetzer hara, which we must transform into a yetzer tov. Therefore, in addition to the usual, three-headed **“shin,”** it has an additional extension, which is shaped like a **“vav,”** in keeping with the aforementioned concept of: **“וַי”ו מוֹסִיף עַל עֵינֵי רֵאשׁוֹן”**. In other words, a **“vav”** is added to the **“shin”** on the left side—symbolizing the yetzer hara—to connect it with the **“shin”** on the right side—symbolizing the yetzer tov—so that it will be influenced and transformed into another yetzer tov.

We can now appreciate why the Torah always emphasizes that the tefillin shel-rosh is placed **“between your eyes,”** even though it is actually worn on top of the brain. It is because the Torah wants to teach us that the purpose of donning the tefillin shel-rosh is to unite the yetzer hara with the yetzer tov in order to transform it into a force for good. Accordingly, the tefillin shel-rosh serves a similar function to the nose. The nose, which is shaped like the letter **“vav,”** connects the two eyes shaped like **“yud”s**—the right eye representing the yetzer tov with the left eye representing the yetzer hara.

The Connection between the Shins and the Name Havaya

This explains beautifully the wonderful connection between the **“shin”** of the shel-rosh and the name **Havaya**—as alluded to by the first letters of the words **“שֵׁם י”י בִּקְרָא”**. As explained, the two **“shin”s** on the tefillin shel-rosh—a regular three-headed one on the right and a four-headed one on the left—are analogous to the two eyes and nose, which resemble the three letters **יו”י**. We have also explained that the **“vav”** connects the two **“yud”s**—representing the yetzer tov and yetzer hara.

Similarly, on the tefillin shel-rosh, the “vav”-like, fourth extension of the left “shin” connects the two “shin”s, which also symbolize the yetzer tov and yetzer hara. This facilitates the transformation of the yetzer hara into a good inclination. It is for this reason that the Torah specifies that the shel-rosh be placed “between your eyes,” just like the nose—the “vav”—which is located between the two eyes—the two “yud”s. Thus, the tefillin she rosh also symbolizes the letters יו”י. This is the message conveyed by the Ba’al HaTurim: The first letters of the words ש”ם י”י spell ש”י”ן, indicating that the two “shin”s on the shel-rosh are also a form of יו”י, whose gematria equals Havaya, blessed is He.

We have now achieved a better understanding of the sacred avodah of donning tefillin. The Chasam Sofer taught us that first we don the shel-yad on the left arm opposite the left cavity of the heart to bind and restrain the yetzer hara. With that accomplished, we don the shel-rosh to coronate HKB”H as our king. Restraining and subjugating the yetzer hara constitutes an act of “sur mei’ra.” Transforming the yetzer hara into a yetzer tov and establishing HKB”H as the King over both yetzers fulfills the obligation of **loving Hashem, your G-d, with your whole heart, with both yetzers.** This is a definite act of “asei tov.”

From this perspective, it is easy to comprehend the statement of Rabbi Eliezer the Great: **“Then all the peoples of the earth will see that the name of Hashem is proclaimed over you, and they will fear you.”** Rabbi Eliezer the Great says: **These (objects causing fear) are the tefillin worn on the head.** It is well-known that the goyim are nurtured by the tumah of the yetzer hara. Consequently, if the yetzer hara is transformed into a yetzer tov, they are deprived of their sustenance. This is what is destined to happen le’asid la’vo when HKB”H slaughters the yetzer hara. Therefore, when they see the tefillin shel-rosh, with the transformation of the yetzer hara to a yetzer tov symbolized by the letter “shin,” they are overcome with enormous fear.

(It is also worth pointing out that the tefillin shel-rosh has two straps emerging from its housing—one to the right and one to the left. We can suggest that the one to the right corresponds to the yetzer tov and the one to the left corresponds to the yetzer hara. They are joined together in a knot in the back of the head. Thus, we symbolize the transformation of the yetzer hara into a yetzer tov and the union of the two force.)



Our thanks and blessings are given to those who donated for the publication of our weekly dvar Torah for the merit of **אחינו בני ישראל**

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