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Sincerely,

Rabbi Yehoshua Werde  
Director

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ב"ה



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## Tefillin

The distinguished Rabbi Meier Jung (1859-1921) said of tefillin: “This religious act performed daily has done more to preserve and to further the high morality of our people than all the books on ethics that have ever been written. The same can also be said of other Mitzvos, though some have a double influence, one direct, making for immediate physical well-being, the other indirect, forming character by teaching constructive restraint through habitual action.”

Throughout the ages, Yidden have risked their lives to preserve this mitzvah. Even in the concentration camps, survivors relate of the measures Yidden went through to don tefillin:

### *The Holocaust and Halakhah*

*When we arose in the darkness of the night, we had just managed to wash, the block leaders and their helpers were hurrying us along to the forced-labor details. There were long queues of prisoners waiting in line, not for bread or coffee, but to fulfill the mitzvah of tefillin. We appointed a special “guard” whose job it was to make sure that no one kept the tefillin on for longer than it took him to say the one verse “Shema Yisrael,” so that more would be able to fulfill the mitzvah.*

## **Phylactery Protection**

In English Tefillin is called phylacteries. What does the word “phylacteries” mean?

Phylacteries comes from Ancient Greek word phylacterion, φυλάσσειν meaning “to guard,” or “to protect.”

The Talmud tells us of the protective powers of Tefillin:

*Talmud, Menachos 35b*

וראו כל עמי הארץ כי שם ה' נקרא עליך ויראו ממך (דברים כ"ח).  
תניא, ר"א הגדול אומר: אלו תפילין שבראש.

*“And all the nations of the earth will see that the name of Hashem is upon you and will fear you” (Devorim 28), Rabi Eliezer the Great says: These refer to the head tefillin.*

In 1967, only two days before the Six Day War, the Rebbe launched the International Tefillin Campaign to provide additional protection for Jews in Eretz Yisroel. The Rebbe repeatedly emphasized this idea that tefillin makes our enemies fear us.

Why would tefillin make our enemies fear us?

## **Why Tefillin**

To understand this let's explore the purpose and meaning of the mitzvah of tefillin.

## **The Importance of Kavanah**

Understanding the meaning of tefillin is not just about understanding a deeper aspect of the mitzvah. Knowing the intent of tefillin is essential to its fulfillment to the extent that the Rabbi Mordechai Yafe (c. 1530-1612) writes in Ateres Zahav:

אם אינו יודע הכוונה, נמצא התפילין במוח ובזרוע כמו אבנים ח"ו

*If one does not know their intent, the Tefillin are considered like stones on his head and arm heaven forbid.*

When the Rebbe launched the campaign for mitvzah tefillin, some non-Lubavitchers objected citing this Ateres Zahav as a reason for not putting on tefillin on anyone who doesn't understand what tefillin are about. The Rebbe responded with the following arguments:

- » According to Shulchan Aruch, the extent of intent needed is to have in mind **that** you are doing a mitzvah.
- » The Levush doesn't mean that the Tefillin are considered like stones chas veshalom. Rather, this is only in relation to the head and heart of the person that when you don't understand or relate to the tefillin it is like they are sitting on a wall or roof of stone.
- » Even if there is no kavanah, there is still a requirement to put on tefillin.
- » Even in reference to davening regarding which the mishnah says that one shouldn't daven without first contemplating the greatness of Hashem, would something even consider missing a day of davening because they didn't first contemplate Hashem's greatness?

While this stresses the importance of the mitzvah of tefillin even when you don't understand its specific intent, it is not in any way intended to undermine the importance of knowing its kavanos. Particularly, as chassidim, it is of even greater

importance to align with the mitzvah by understanding its reasoning and intent.

### **What are the Kavanos of Tefillin?**

In the siddur, the Alter Rebbe outlines the following Kavanos:

(It is advised to memorize these kavanos to remind yourself of them every morning when you don tefillin.)

*Siddur Tehilas Hashem, p. 12*

יכוין בהנחת תפילין שצונו הקב"ה לכתוב ד' פרשיות אלו שיש בהם יחוד שמו ויציאת מצרים כדי שזכור נסים ונפלאות שעשה עמנו שהם מורים על יחודו ואשר לו הכח והממשלה לעשות בעליונים ובחתוננים כרצונו וצונו להניח על הזרוע כנגד הלב ועל הראש כנגד המוח שמשעבד הנשמה שהיא במוח וגם תאות ומחשבות לבנו לעבודתו ית' שע"י הנחת תפילין יזכור את הבורא וימעיט הנאתו.

*When one puts on tefillin, he should bear in mind that the Holy One, blessed be He, commanded us to write on the parchment contained in the tefillin the four specific Biblical passages (Shemos 13:1-10; 11-16; Devarim 6:4-9; 11:13-21) which mention His unity and the exodus from Egypt, in order that we remember the miracles and wonders He performed for us. They indicate His unity and demonstrate that He has power and dominion over those above and below, to do with them as He pleases. And He has enjoined us to place the tefillin on the arm adjacent to the heart, and on the head above the brain so that we submit our soul which is in the*

*brain, as well as the desires and thoughts of our heart, to His service. Thus, by putting on tefillin, one will be mindful of the Creator and restrict his pleasures.*

The above paragraph contains several abstract concepts. Throughout the course of this lesson, we will unpack the ideas embedded within this collection of kavanos to get a better grasp of the mitzvah of tefillin and its significance.

## **The Meaning of Tefillin**

In the Kuzari, Rabbi Yehudah Halevi (1075-1141) describes the function of tefillin being to connect the primary organs of the person, namely the head and heart, to Hashem:

*Rabbi Yehudah HaLevi, Sefer HaKuzari 3:11*

וקושר מצפוננו בעניין האלוקי בתחבולות, מהם מצוות כתובות ומהם מקובלות, והוא נושא התפילין על מקום המחשבה והזיכרון מהראש, ואוצל מהם רצועה מגעת אל ידו, כדי שיראה אותה עם השעות, ותפילין של יד על מבוע הכוחות, רוצה לומר הלב... והכתוב בתפילין, הייחוד והגמול והעונש וזכר יציאת מצרים, מפני שהיא טענה שאין בה מדחה, כי לעניין האלוקי התחברות בברואים והשגחה עליהם וידיעה במעשיהם.

*[A Jew] connects his mind with the Divine Influence through various means, some of which are mitzvos written in the Torah, while others are received tradition: He wears tefillin on his head, on the seat of thought and memory, the straps falling down on his hand so that he can see them at all times.*



*He wears the hand tefillin on the source of his faculties, that is, the heart ... Inside the tefillin are written [verses describing God's Unity, reward and punishment, and the remembrance of the Exodus from Egypt, because they furnish the irrefutable proof that the Divine Influence is attached to mankind, and that Providence watches them and keeps record of their deeds.*

### **Focusing your Thoughts**

The Rambam relates the great holiness of tefillin to its function as focusing ones thoughts on the truth. When the person is in a focused frame of mind, he doesn't get carried away in silly behavior, he doesn't think idle thoughts, but devoted himself to the truth:

*Rambam Laws of Tefillin 4:25*

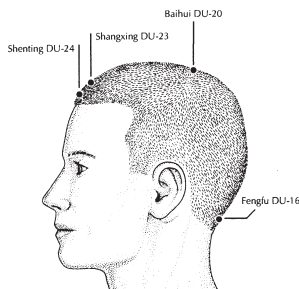
קדושת תפילין, קדושה גדולה היא: שכל זמן שתפילין על ראשו של אדם, ועל זרועו-הוא עניו וירא, ואינו נמשך בשחוק ובשיחה בטילה, ואינו מהרהר במחשבות רעות, אלא מפנה ליבו לדברי האמת והצדק. לפיכך צריך אדם להשתדל להיותן עליו, כל היום-שמצותן, כך היא. אמרו עליו על רב תלמיד רבנו הקדוש, שכל ימיו לא ראוהו שהלך ארבע אמות בלא תורה, או בלא ציצית, או בלא תפילין... וכל הרגיל בתפילין- מאריך ימים, שנאמר "אדוניי, עליהם יחיו" (ישעיהו לח, טז).

*The holiness of tefillin is very great. The whole time that tefillin are on the head and the arm of a man he will be modest and G-d-fearing and will not be drawn after laughter and idle chatter. He will not think bad thoughts, but will turn his heart to words*

of truth and righteousness. Therefore, every man should try to wear tefillin all day, because this is the mitzvah. They said about Rav, the student of Rebbi HaKadosh (Rabbi Yehudah HaNasi), that his whole life he was never seen walking [even] four amos without Torah, tzitzis or tefillin ... And someone who wears tefillin regularly will have length of days, as it is written, “When the Lord is upon them they will live” (Yeshayahu 35:16).

### **Fascinating Fact: Tefillin— Clarity of Mind**

In a 2002 Journal of Chinese Medicine (vol. 70) there is an article by Dr. Steven Schram who discovered that the points where the tefillin are placed are actually the accurate positions prescribed by Chinese Medicine to achieve mental clarity through acupuncture!



### **Rejoice with Trepidation**

An example of the idea that tefillin keep ones mind focused on Hashem can be seen in the following narrative from the Gemorah:

*Talmud, Berachos 30b*

מאי וגילו ברעדה? אמר רב אדא בר מתנא אמר רבה במקום גילה שם תהא רעדה. אב"י הוה יתיב קמיה דרבה חזייה דהוה קא בדח טובא אמר וגילו ברעדה כתיב א"ל אנא תפילין מנחנא

*What is meant by, “Rejoice with trepidation” (Tehillim 2:11)? Rav Adda bar Masna said in the name of Rabbah, “In the place where there is rejoicing there should also be trepidation.” Abaye was sitting before Rabbah who noticed that he was overly cheerful. Rabbah asked Abaye, “Doesn’t the verse say ‘Rejoice with trepidation?’” Abaye replied, “[Do not worry,] I am wearing tefillin.”*

### **Wearing Tefillin All Day Long**

For this reason (to keep ones thoughts focused), in the times of the mishnah and gemorah, people wore tefillin for the entire duration of the day. Nowadays, however, we are unable to do so, as explained in Shulchan Aruch:

*Shulchan Aruch Orach Chayim 37:2*

מצותן להיותם עליו כל היום אבל מפני שצריכים גוף נקי שלא יפיה בהם ושלא יסיה דעתו מהם ואין כל אדם יכול לזוהר בהם נהגו שלא להניחם כל היום ומ"מ צריך כל אדם לזוהר בהם להיותם עליו בשעת ק"ש ותפלה.

*The mitzvah is to wear tefillin all day long. However, tefillin require a clean body (to the point that a person may not even pass wind while wearing them) and that one not take his mind off them. And since not every person is able to be meticulous about this, therefore the custom is not to wear them all day. However, a person must be meticulous about wearing them when he is saying Shema and praying the Amidah.*

A closer examination of the Rambam (ibid.) reveals that the mitzvah of tefillin is all about initiating a relationship with Hashem. The purpose of focusing our thoughts on Hashem, is about keeping the realization of Hashem's presence close to our minds and hearts. We find that Hashem too dons tefillin. By understanding the function of Hashem's tefillin, we can understand the purpose of the tefillin we wear. What does it say in Hashem's tefillin?

*Talmud, Brochos 6a*

אמר ליה רב נחמן בר יצחק לרב חייא בר אבין: "תפילין דמארי עלמא  
מה כתיב בהו?" אמר ליה: "ומי כעמך ישראל גוי אחד בארץ"

*Rav Nachman Bar Yitzchak said to Rav Chiya Bar Avin: "What does it say in the tefillin of the Master of the world?" He replied: "And who is like Your nation Israel, one nation in the land."*

## **A Locket**

The tefillin highlight the special relationship between Hashem and the Jewish people. Our tefillin speak of Hashem's unity, and our duties to Him; Hashem's tefillin speak of our uniqueness as Jews.

In this sense, the idea of tefillin is similar to that of a locket, a case that is worn close to the heart as a constant reminder of the one you love and as a sign of your devotion and commitment to them.

Of course the metaphor of Hashem wearing tefillin do not refer to physical tefillin, as we cannot ascribe physical properties to Hashem.

## What then are Hashem's tefillin really?

In a maamar, the Rebbe explains what the concept of Hashem's tefillin really are:

*Es Havaye He'emartah, Maamarim Melukatim, Vol. 4 p. 262*

זה שהקב"ה מניח תפילין, נעשה ע"י הנחת תפילין דישראל. ויובן זה ע"פ הידוע דכוונת מצות תפילין [וכוונה זו היא חלק דהמצוה] היא לשעבד הלב והמוח. דענין השעבוד, שמשעבד עצמו לאלקות, הוא דוגמת מצות ק"ש שענינה הוא קבלת עול מלכות שמים (פרשה ראשונה) וקבלת עול מצוות (פרשה שני), דענין השעבוד וקב"ע הוא למעלה מטו"ד, וביחד עם זה, השעבוד דתפילין הוא בנוגע לכחות פרטים (משא"כ הקב"ע דק"ש הוא כללי), שמשעבד את ד' המוחין (חו"ב ודעת שנחלק לחו"ג) שלו, וזה נמשך גם בהמדות שבלב, שעבוד הלב

*Hashem's putting on tefillin, is accomplished through Jews putting on Tefillin. This can be understood based on that which is known that the intent of the mitzvah of Tefillin [and this intent is part of the mitzvah] is to submit the heart and mind to [Hashem's] service. This idea of submission that one submits himself to Hashem's service is analogous to the mitzvah of reciting the shema which is about accepting the yoke of the kingdom of heaven (in the first paragraph) and accepting the yoke of mitzvos (in the second paragraph). The idea of submitting and accepting the yoke transcend reason and logic, yet at the same time, the submitting to [hashem's] service of tefillin relates to the individual faculties (whereas accepting the*

*yoke of krias shma is a general concept), that one enslaves his four intellects (chochmah, binah, and daas which is divided into chessed and gevurah) and this is also drawn down into the emotions of the heart, enslaving ones heart.*

The Rebbe explains that we assist Hashem in putting on tefillin when we put on tefillin. How is this so?

While the concept of intellect and emotions exist in the spiritual worlds, they do not manifest in a physical mind and heart.

When we don tefillin we submit our hearts and minds to Hashem.

Just as a slave loses his self identity when he becomes a slave, similarly, when we put on tefillin, we plug into a higher reality and become a part of that reality, losing our personal identity.

This way, the physical tefillin upon our head and arm, and the thoughts and feelings that occupy our mind and heart serve as the physical components of Hashem's tefillin.

To get a better grasp of this concept. After all, our tefillin speak of Hashem's unity, not our preciousness as Hashem's tefillin do. How can our tefillin serve as Hashem's tefillin?

The answer to this question lies in the reason for our devotion to Hashem, which is also the reason why Jews are so unique. There is a part within us that is a part of Hashem, in fact, the essence of who we are is a part of Hashem. Hashem created us to naturally love ourselves and to be committed to self-serving causes. The reason for this is because essentially we are a part of Hashem and we are supposed to love Hashem

and be committed to His service.

When we don tefillin, we connect with the part of us that is a part of Hashem, we express our love and commitment to Hashem, and it is this expression of love and commitment that makes us a special nation. Therefore, written within our act of putting on tefillin, is Hashem's tefillin that speaks of our uniqueness.

### **Sign of a Jew**

Therefore, in Sefer Mitzvos Gedolos Rabbi Moshe of Coucy explains in one of his derashos how tefillin one of the three signs of a Jew's Judaism:

*Sefer Mitzvos Gedolos, Positive Mitzvah #3*

כך דרשתי פרשה זו בגליות ישראל להוכיח שכל אחד ואחד חייב בתפילין ומוזוה ועוד דרשתי להם כי ממש מאות ושלוש עשרי מצות שנצטוו ישראל אין לך שום מצוה שתהא אות ועדות כי אם שלוש מצות והם מילה ושבת ותפילין שנכתבו בשלשתן אות והם שלשתן אות ועדות לישראל שהם עבדים להקב"ה.

ועל פי שנים עדים יקום דבר, כל אחד מישראל אינו יהודי שלם אא"כ יש לו שני עדים שהוא יהודי. הלכך בשבת ויו"ט שנקרא שבת ושבת נקרא אות פטור אדם מלהניח תפילין כי די שיש לו שני עדים שהוא יהודי עדות שבת ועדות מילה אבל בחול חייב כל אדם להניח תפילין כדי שיהא לו שני עדים אות תפילין עם אות המילה...

עוד זאת דרשתי להם כי יותר חפץ הקב"ה באדם רשע שינח תפילין מאדם צדיק ועיקר תפילין נצטוו להיות זכרון לרשעים ולישרם דרך טובה ויותר הם צריכים זכר וחיוזוק מאותם שגדלו ביראת שמים כל ימיהם והבאתי ראיה גדולה וחזק כי בתפילין יש ארבע פרשיות ובכל אחת כתוב ולטוטפתת חוץ מאחת ששינה בה הכתוב וכתוב בה וזכרון

ללמד שעיקר חיוב תפלין לאותם שצריכים יותר זכר....

*This is what I explained to the exiles of Israel, to show to them that every individual is obligated in tefillin and mezuzah. I also explained to them that of the 613 mitzvos that Israel was commanded, there is no mitzvah that is considered a sign and testimony apart from three mitzvos: Bris Milah, Shabbos, and tefillin. Regarding each of them the Torah says they are a sign; and they truly are a sign and testimony to Israel that they are servants of God.*

*“On the basis of two witnesses a fact is established.” As such, each Jew is not fully Jewish unless he has two witnesses that he is Jewish. Therefore on Shabbos and Festivals (which are also called Shabbos), a man is exempt from wearing tefillin because Shabbos itself is called a sign. It is enough, then, that there are two witnesses that he is Jewish: the witnesses of Shabbos and Bris Milah. But during the week a person is obligated to wear tefillin in order that he should have two witnesses: the sign of tefillin and the sign of Bris Milah...*

*I also explained to them that Hashem desires that wicked people put on tefillin even more than the righteous, because the main reason that we were commanded in tefillin is so that we have something to remind the wicked and to set them on the honest*



*and good path. They need the reminder and encouragement even more than those who grew up with the fear of Heaven all their lives ...*

## **Head Tefillin**

There is a popular vort from the Alter Rebbe that Tefillin Shebirosh, head tefillin are not just tefillin that are placed on the head, but that are placed engraved inside the head, meaning that one's mind is occupied with what the tefillin are all about.

For this reason, tefillin can take the place of perpetual Torah study, as the Midrash relates:

### *Midrash Tehilim 1*

ר' אליעזר אומר אמרו ישראל לפני הקב"ה, רבונו של עולם אנו רוצים להיות יגיעים בתורה יומם ולילה, אבל אין לנו פנאי, אמר להם הקב"ה קיימו מצות תפילין, ומעלה אני עליכם כאילו אתם יגיעים לילה ויום. ר' יוחנן אמר מקרא מלא הוא, והיה לך לאות על ירך ולזכרון בין עיניך למען תהיה תורת ה' בפיך (שמות יג ט)

*Rabbi Eliezer said: The Jews said before the Holy One, blessed be He, "Master of the universe, we want to toil in the study of Torah day and night, but we have no time". Replied the Holy One, blessed be He, fulfill the mitzvah of tefillin and I will consider it as if you toiled day and night.*

*Rabbi Yochanan said: It is a complete verse "and it shall be for you as a sign upon your arm and as a remembrance between your eyes in order that the*

*Torah of Hashem shall be on your lips.”*

This is because Torah study and tefillin are both about ones mind being focused and filled with Hashem's unity. As the Alter Rebbe explains in Tanya, regarding the uniqueness of Torah Study:

*Tanya Ch. 5*

הרי זה משיג ותופס ומקיף בשכלו רצונו וחכמתו של הקדוש ברוך הוא, דלית מחשבה תפיסא ביה ולא ברצונו וחכמתו...  
הוא יחוד נפלא, שאין יחוד כמוהו ולא כערכו נמצא כלל בגשמיות להיות לאחדים ומיוחדים ממש מכל צד ופנה

*He actually comprehends and grasps the Will and wisdom of Hashem, Whom no thought can grasp, nor [can any thought grasp] His Will and wisdom,...Now this is a most wonderful unity; in the physical realm there is no unity similar or parallel to it, [i.e., of two things as disproportionate as human intellect and Torah, Hashem's intellect] that they should actually become one and united from every side and angle.*

This also explains why Kavanah plays a big role in the mitzvah of tefillin.

### **Mind Over Matter**

A fundamental principle of Chabad philosophy is that the intellect must control the emotions. Unfortunately, there exists a schism between the mind and the heart. Moreover, often the emotions control the mind, and the intellect is

utilized merely to provide justification, rationalization, and excuses for this “instinct-emotion centered” existence. The mitzvah of tefillin and its practice facilitates the attainment by the individual of unity of mind and heart, intellect and emotion.

## **Arm Tefillin**

Tefillin are placed on the arm, not only because they need to be placed opposite the heart, but because the arm represents action. As the Rebbe explains in a Maamar, the idea of the head tefillin involves intellect and understand and therefore connects with higher levels in G-dliness, but the hand tefillin represents submission to Hashem’s service and therefore its effect is greater than that of the head tefillin:

*Vechazakta Vehayisah L’Ish, 5728, Maamarim Melukatim vol. 4*

למה מקדימין הנחת תש”י לתש”ר...כי המעלה דעבודה היא בעיקר בהעבודה דיחודא תתאה (בי”ע), ולכן העבודה דיחוו”ת מגעת למעלה יותר מהעבודה דיחוו”ע (אצילות)

*Why do we put on the arm tefillin before the head tefillin?...Since the advantage of service is primarily through low-level unity ([though action] in the worlds Briah, Yetzirah, and Asiyah), therefore the service of lower-level unity reaches higher than the service of higher-level unity ([of thought in] Atzilus).*

## **Action**

*The purpose of Tefillin is to connect to Hashem*

*not just in thought and sentiment, but in action, as Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch puts it:*

*Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, Horeb*

*“A truth, in order to produce results, must be impressed upon the mind and heart repeatedly and emphatically. Merely to acknowledge the essential principles of righteousness and love, is not sufficient to actually build up such a life ... In addition thereto, symbolic words and actions are necessary so that they may become indelibly stamped upon the soul, and thus preserved for yourself and for others.”*

Our service of Hashem needs to include two primary components:

- 1) Our mind controlling our heart (represented in the head tefillin)
- 2) Action (represented in the arm tefillin)

However, of the two, action comes first, therefore we begin donning the arm tefillin before the head tefillin.

Why does action precede intellect? Shouldn't our actions be guided by our intellect?

When we say action comes first, we mean commitment. If a person's commitment is based on reason, it is easy for them to come up with an intellectual rationalization to do otherwise. However, if the commitment to action (to do what Hashem instructs) precedes all, then intellect is only a tool to connect with and rationalize the truth, not a tool to determine the

truth. Action represent “kabolat ol,” which should precede any personal understandings and feelings. Guided by kabolat ol, the mind can control the heart and all ones abilities to achieve what Hashem wants of us.

This is also the purpose of the straps of even the head tefillin to descend below and affect the lower faculties of the person. As the Rebbe explains:

*Es Havaye He'emarta, 5730, Maamarim Melukatim*

נמשך זה בכל הכחות, גם בכחות התחתונים. דזהו מה שהרצועות דתש"ר צריכים להיות עד (למטה מן) הטבור, שגם עניני האדם שמפלגך ולתתא יהיו משועבדים לאלקות.

This is drawn down into all faculties, even the lowest faculties. This is why the straps of the head tefillin need to reach (below) the belly button, that even the aspects of the person in his lower half should be enslaved to Hashem.

### **Inside the Boxes**

Inside the head tefillin are four separate parchments, on each one is inscribed a different portion from the Torah that mentions the mitzvah of tefillin:

*Shulchan Aruch Orach Chayim 32:2 with Mishnah Brurah*

של ראש יכתוב כל אחת בקלף לבדה, ושל יד כותבן כולם בקלף אחד. בקלף אחד - מדכתיב והיה לאות על ירך דמשמע אות אחד כלומר בית אחד וכשם שהוא אות אחד מבחוץ כך יש להיות לכתחלה אות א' מבפנים שתהיה על קלף אחד  
אבל בש"ר שיש בו ד' בתים צריך שיהי' הפרשיות כתובות בד' קלפים

For the head tefillin one should write each portion on a separate scroll, and for the arm tefillin one should write all [four] of them on one scroll.

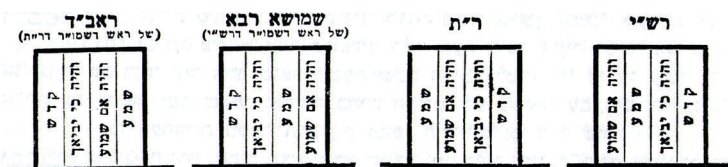
This is because it says, “And they shall be for a sign on your arm” [in the singular form] meaning one sign, one compartment; and just like it must be only one sign on the outside, so too it should ideally only be one sign on the inside, written on one scroll.

*Mishnah Berurah:*

But for the head tefillin, which consists of four separate compartments [as the plural form “ornaments” is used for it—Ed.], the passages should be written on four separate scrolls.

### What’s the difference between Rashi and Rabeinu Tam Tefillin?

The difference between Rashi and Rabeinu Tam’s tefillin centers around the order of the parshiyos inside the tefillin:



There is a book of teshuvos that was written by one of the Baalei Hatosfos that discusses this questions. Min Hashomayim is probably the most unique sefer of teshuvos ever published. It is a compilation of answers that were received by Sheilas Chalom, in which the requester would

write his question on parchment and put it under his pillow when he went to sleep, and when he woke up the answer would be written on the parchment.

(This sefer is most famous for being the earliest reference to the Yom Tov of Yud Tes Kislev, more than 500 years before the events of Yud Test Kislev transpired. A mysteriously encrypted answer was received from heaven that alludes to the significance of Yud Tes Kislev as a day of good tidings and tells the questioner that he must therefore wait until morning for an answer:

*Shaalos Uteshuvos Min Hashomayim, 5*

שאלתי ליל ג' י"ט לחודש כסלו ... והשיבו: באמת היה דבר ה' והדברים עתיקים, עתיק יומיא אמרן והיום יום בשורה, וחכינו עד אור הבוקר,

*I asked on Tuesday Eve. on the nineteenth day of the month of Kislev ... and they answered: In truth there were words from Hashem and the words are ancient, the One of Ancient Days said them and today is a day of good tidings, and we will wait until the light of morning.*

How does this relate to the difference between Rashi and Rabeinu Tam tefillin?)

In one of the questions, the questioner asks whether the Halachah about the order of parshiyos in the tefillin is like Rashi or Rabeinu Tam. He got the most surprising of answers:

*Shaalos Uteshuvos Min Hashomayim, 3*

ועוד שאלתי על סדר פרשיות שבתפלין וכך היתה שאלתי: אנא המלך

הגדול הגבור והנורא חכם הרזים מגלה נסתרות מגיד נעלמות שומר הברית והחסד, הגדל נא חסדך עמנו היום וצוה למלאכך הקדושים להודיעני את אשר נסתפקנו בסדר פרשיות של תפלין.ועתה מלך מלכים צוה למלאכך הקדושים להודיעני הלכה כדברי מי, ודברי מי אתה מחבב.

והשיבו: אלו ואלו דברי אלהים חיים, וכמחלוקת למטה כך מחלוקת למעלה. הקב"ה אומר הויות באמצע וכל פמליא של מעלה אומרים הויות כסדרן.

*I further asked about the order of the portions in the Tefillin and this was my question: Please, Great and awesome King, the wise one who knows secrets, reveals mysteries, tells hidden things, who protects the covenant and the kindness, please intensify Your kindness with us today and instruct Your holy angels to inform me that which we are in doubt about the order of the portions in the Tefillin. And now, King of Kings, instruct Your holy angels to inform me who the halachah is like, and whose opinion do You cherish.*

*And they answered: These and these are the words of the living G-d, and just as there is a dispute below, so there is a dispute above. The Holy One Blessed is He says the portions beginning with the word "vehaya" are placed in the middle [compartments of the tefillin] and all the heavenly hosts say the portions beginning with "vehaya" are placed in the order they appear in the Torah.*



This means that Hashem agrees with Rabeinu tam and the heavenly hosts agree with Rashi's opinion.

This would explain an unusual saying quoted in the name of "holy people" that one who puts on Rabeinu Tam tefillin on a daily basis is guaranteed that at least once in his lifetime he will merit to mistakenly say a brocho and daven in Rabeinu Tam tefillin. (Of course one is not allowed to knowingly say a brocho on Rabeinu Tam tefillin and one is supposed to daven in Rashi tefillin, but there is nevertheless a big merit in doing so in Rabeinu Tam tefillin.) After all, it is Hashem's opinion!

To conclude with the story:

*Talmud, Shabbos 49a*

פעם אחת גזרה מלכות רומי הרשעה גזירה על ישראל, שכל המניח תפילין ינקרו את מוחו. והיה אלישע מניחם ויוצא לשוק. ראהו קסדור אחד - רץ מפניו, ורץ אחריו. וכיון שהגיע אצלו נטלן מראשו ואחזן בידו, אמר לו: מה זה בידך? אמר לו: כנפי יונה. פשט את ידו ונמצאו כנפי יונה. לפיכך קורין אותו אלישע בעל כנפים. ומאי שנא כנפי יונה משאר עופות? - משום דאמתיל כנסת ישראל ליונה, שנאמר +תהלים סח+ כנפי יונה נחפה בכסף וגו' מה יונה כנפיה מגינות עליה - אף ישראל מצות מגינות עליהן

*Once the wicked Roman government decreed against the Jewish people that whoever put on tefillin would be stabbed in the head. However, Elisha would put them on and go out to the market place. Once, a Roman commander saw him. He tried to run away, but the Roman commander chased after him. Once the Roman commander caught up to him, he removed the tefillin from his*

*head and held them in his hand. The commander said to him: What is it you have in your hands? He responded: The wings of a dove. He opened his hands and found the wings of a dove. Therefore they called him "Elisha of the Wings." And why the wings of a dove of all other birds? Since the Jewish people are compared to a dove, as the posuk says (Tehilim 68) "wings of a dove coated in silver," just as a dove's wings protect her -- so too the mitzvos protect the Jewish people.*

**Concluding Question:**

In your own words, based on the ideas discussed above, what should you have in mind when you put on tefillin?

# Take-Aways

- » Knowledge of its intent is of primary importance when it comes to the mitzvah of Tefillin (more so than other mitzvos).
- » Tefillin discuss the unity of Hashem and our commitment to serving Him.
- » The purpose of Tefillin is to connect one's mind, heart and action to Hashem.
- » While the idea of the head tefillin is for the mind to control emotions, the arm tefillin come first because action and submission to Hashem's will are of primary importance.
- » Donning tefillin is likened to studying Torah all day and all night since through tefillin one occupies one's mind and one's focus on Hashem (like Torah in which one's mind is occupied in Hashem's wisdom).
- » When we put on Tefillin we also help Hashem wear Tefillin, since we bring out the uniqueness of the Jew's devotion to Hashem which is the expression in action of what is written in Hashem's tefillin (in concept).
- » The difference between Rashi and Rabeinu Tam Tefillin have to do with the order of the parshiyos inside the boxes.
- » While the halacha in practice follows the opinion of Rashi, Rabeinu Tam tefillin are of a greater degree of holiness.

