

# PUTTING ON SHEL-YAD BEFORE THE SHEL-ROSH

BO

VA'ESCHANAN

EIKEV

SHEL YAD BEFORE SHEL ROSH / TORAH READING FOR CHANUKAH / IF ONE  
PUT ON SHEL ROSH BEFORE SHEL YAD / KABOLAS OL  
PIETY BEFORE WISDOM

לע"נ זאב ארי' ע"ה בן יבלחט"א שניאור זלמן גליק

The Alter Rebbe writes in Shulchan Aruch: “A person should first put on the tefillin shel yad, and then the shel rosh,” and then continues with the reason, “this comes from the Torah, as it says in Va’eschanan, "וקשרתם לידך לאות על ידך", that you should tie them on your arm, followed by “והיו לטוטפות וגו'.” That they should be totafos between your eyes.”<sup>1</sup>

The source of this halachah is from Menachos. It is taught there, “We learned in a Mishnah, that when a person puts on tefillin, he should first put on the shel yad, and then the shel rosh.” The Gemara brings the source from the passuk that says “וקשרתם לאות על ידך” and then “והיו לטוטפות או בין עיניך”<sup>2</sup>

The Mechilta brings the same halachah, but brings the makor from the end of parshas Bo, “והיה לך לאות על ידך ולזכרון בין עיניך” (The tefillin should be a sign on your arm and a reminder between your eyes). The Mechilta explains, “As long as the shel yad are on the arm, the shel rosh should be on the head. Based on this they said, the tefillin shel yad should be put on first, followed by the shel rosh.”

We need to understand why the Gemara brought a passuk from Vaeschanan in Devarim, and not from Bo which in Shemos, much earlier on in the Torah?

We could have answered that the difference between the Gemara and Mechilta is a disagreement whether the precedence of tefillin shel yad over shel rosh is mitzad גברא or הפצא, and this is why they bring their respective pessukim.

1. Devarim 6:8.  
2. Menachos 36a.

Gavra, or man, means that it is a chiyuv on the person doing the mitzvah, that he should do it in a specific way. In our case that would mean that it does not make a difference for the tefillin themselves, rather that the person putting on tefillin has to put on the shel yad first. This would be in line with the Gemara which says “When he puts them on, he should first etc.” and the passuk brought by the Gemara, “You should tie the etc.” where the emphasis is on the person.

Cheftza, or object, means that the mitzvah itself is impacted. This would mean that the mitzvah itself needs to be done in a specific way. This is in line with the Mechilta, which says “As long as the shel yad are on the arm, the shel rosh should be on etc.” and brings the passuk, “They should be a sign etc.” that the emphasis is on the tefillin.

We can't, however, explain it this way, since the Sifri<sup>3</sup> brings the din in the same manner as the Mechilta but with the passuk from the Gemara.

**2** To understand this we first need to understand the two ways of explaining the precedence of the shel yad over the shel rosh: The first way is that the shel rosh is more complete when accompanied by the shel yad, and therefore the shel yad needs to be put on first. Alternatively, this is just the way the mitzvah is done, that first the shel yad is put on, and then the shel rosh.

**3** The practical difference is:

First, we find a machlokes regarding the krias hatorah of Rosh Chodesh Teves, which is on Chanukah. The halachah is, we first lein the krias for Rosh Chodesh, and then, in a second Sefer Torah, we



### 3. Vaeschanan

lein the Chanukah kriaah. The Rem" a and the Ta" z disagree about someone who starts off with the Chanukah kriaah. The Rem" a and the Magen Avraham holds that he needs to go back, lein the Rosh Chodesh kriaah, and then lein the part for Chanukah again. The Ta" z holds that he does not need to go back, he should finish the Chanukah piece, then do the kriaah for Rosh Chodesh. The machlokes here is similar:

According to the svara that the shel yad enhances the shel rosh, and therefore is put on first, someone who puts on the shel rosh first can now put the shel yad on, and the shel rosh will have more shleimus. However, if we go according to the other svara, that the shel yad being put on first is the correct way to do the mitzvah, someone who makes this mistake has now not put on tefillin properly at all!

**4** We can say that this is the difference between the Gemara and the Mechilta:

According to the Gemara, it is only a shleimus in the tefillin shel rosh to have the shel yad put on first. (This is also what it says in the Nemukei Yosef on the Gemara, "He should put them – the shel rosh – on first," and continues that we learn from the passuk of the Gemara that the shel rosh should be put on last.) The Mechilta holds that the order is part of the mitzvah of tefillin.

This is why they use their respective pessukim. The Mechilta learns the halachah from parshas Bo, which is where the Torah gives us the mitzvah of tefillin for the first time, since it holds that the shel yad preceding the shel rosh is part of the mitzvah itself. However the Gemara, which learns that it is just a halachah of tefillin, learns it from a later passuk which isn't the main source of tefillin.

**5** In the Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch, it is brought that the shel yad is near the heart and the shel rosh is by the brain, "to subjugate the neshama which is in the brain, and (the shel yad for) the desires and emotions of the heart to serve Hashem Yisborach."<sup>4</sup>

The difference between these two concepts is that emotional avodah includes kabalas ol and yiras Hashem, while intellectual avodah includes learning about Torah. This is what the Torah is teaching us by placing the shel yad before the shel rosh, that we first need to serve Hashem with kabalas ol, and only then, with this introduction can we learn Torah. (This is all the more so according to the Gemara which holds that this gives more shleimus, through starting off with yiras Hashem and kabalas ol, the limud hatorah is on a higher level. As it says in Pirkei Avos, "Someone who's yiras Hashem precedes his chochmah, his chochmah lasts.")



4. *Orach Chaim 25:11.*

## STUDY AID

1. The two sources for the shel yad being put on before the shel rosh. (The Gemara: from Vaeschanan; the Mechilta: from Bo.)
2. The question on the Gemara.
3. (One way to explain, gavra and cheftza, and why it doesn't work based on the Sifri.) Two ways to explain the halachah itself.
4. The difference between the two ways (based on Hilchos Chanukah).
5. How to explain our machlokes, based on the above.
6. The lesson in our avodah, that kabolos ol comes before using sechel to learn.

Source:

על פי ליקוטי שיחות חלק י"ט פרשת ואתחנן שיחה ב'