



# Likkutei Sichos

Volume 19 | Vaeschanan | Sichah 2

## The Order of Tefillin

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Translated by Rabbi Mendel Rapoport  
Edited by Rabbi Eliezer Robbins and Rabbi Y. Eliezer Danzinger

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## 1.

### THE ORDER OF *TEFILLIN*

Regarding the order of donning *tefillin*, the *Talmud* says:<sup>1</sup>

It was taught in a *Beraisa*: When a person dons *tefillin*, he dons the arm-*tefillin* and then dons the head-*tefillin*. When he removes his *tefillin*, he removes the head-*tefillin* and then removes the arm-*tefillin*. {The *Gemara* asks: The ruling that} when a person dons *tefillin*, he dons the arm-*tefillin* and then dons the head-*tefillin* is understood, as it says {in Scripture},<sup>2</sup> “You shall bind them for a sign upon your arm,” and then it says, “and they shall be for frontlets between your eyes.” But from where do we derive the ruling that when he removes his *tefillin*, he removes the head-*tefillin* and then removes the arm-*tefillin*? Rabba explains: Rav Huna clarified for me the source of this ruling. The verse states: “You shall bind them for a sign upon your arm, and they shall be for frontlets between your eyes”: As long as the head-*tefillin* are between your eyes, you shall be wearing two {*tefillin*, i.e., both the head- and arm-*tefillin*}.

(The {plural} subject “*they* shall be” implies two. Any time the head-*tefillin* are worn, the arm-*tefillin* are also worn. This implies that the head-*tefillin* are removed first — Rashi.)

*Mechilta* comments on the verse, “They shall be for you as a sign on your arm...”:<sup>3</sup>

Any time the arm-*tefillin* are on your arm, place the head-*tefillin* on your head. Based on this, they said that the *mitzvah* of *tefillin* is such that when a person dons *tefillin*, he dons the arm-*tefillin* and then dons the head-*tefillin*. When he removes them, he removes the head-*tefillin* and then removes the arm-*tefillin*.

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<sup>1</sup> *Menachos* 36a.

<sup>2</sup> *Devarim* 6:8.

<sup>3</sup> *Shemos* 13:9.

We must clarify:

- a) Why does the *Talmud* derive the order of donning *tefillin* from the verse “you shall bind... and they shall be...” in *parshas Vaeschanan*, and not — as *Mechiltah* does — from the (**earlier**) verse in *parshas Bo*, where the *mitzvah* of *tefillin* is recorded for the first time?
- b) Based on a simple understanding of the *Talmud*, we need **two** sources: One to inform us that “when a person dons *tefillin*, he dons the arm-*tefillin* and then dons the head-*tefillin*,” and a separate source that “when he removes his *tefillin*, he removes the head-*tefillin* and then removes the arm-*tefillin*.” According to *Mechilta*, however, both rulings are derived from the same source!

## 2.

### GAVRA VS CHEFTZAH

Seemingly, one difficulty resolves the other. This will be understood by first clarifying how — according to *Mechilta* — the second ruling, “When he removes his *tefillin*, he removes the head-*tefillin* and then removes the arm-*tefillin*,” is derived from the verse?

The explanation: The difference between the *mitzvah*, “they shall be for you as a sign on your arm” in *parshas Bo*<sup>4</sup> and the *mitzvah*, “You shall bind them for a sign upon your arm” in *parshas Vaeschanan* is: In *parshas Vaeschanan* the *mitzvah* relates to the act of (binding on the arm of) the person — “**you shall bind them** for a sign upon your arm.” In contrast, in the verse “they shall be for you as a sign on your arm” in *parshas Bo*, the *mitzvah* is that “they shall be” — that the *tefillin* should be a “sign on your arm and a remembrance {on your head} between your eyes.”

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<sup>4</sup> {Known as the portion of “*Kadesh*,” one of the four Scriptural passages that are placed in the *tefillin*.}

In other words: The verse in *parshas Vaeschanan* relates to the *gavra*<sup>5</sup> and the verse in *parshas Bo* — to the *cheftzah*.<sup>6</sup>

Since the Talmud speaks of the order of donning *tefillin* as (an obligation of) the *gavra* — “**When a person** dons *tefillin*, he dons the arm-*tefillin* and then dons the head-*tefillin*” — the *Talmud* learns this ruling from the verse that commands a person: “**You shall bind them** for a sign upon your arm and they shall be for frontlets between your eyes.”

Therefore, a separate teaching — unrelated to the obligation and order for **donning** *tefillin* — is required (“As long as the head-*tefillin* are between your eyes, you shall be wearing two {sets of *tefillin*}”) {as a source} for the order of removing *tefillin*.

*Mechilta*, however, does not speak of the *mitzvah* of **donning** *tefillin* from the *gavra* perspective, but rather, from the perspective of *cheftzah* — *tefillin shall be* a “sign on your arm and a remembrance between your eyes.” Therefore, the source {for the order of *tefillin*} is from the verse, “They shall be for you as a sign on your arm,” teaching us that “any time the **arm-*tefillin* are on your arm**, place the head-*tefillin* on your head.” Consequently, the phrase, “based on this, they said” {in *Mechilta*} teaches us regarding the conduct required of a person in **both** stages: “When a person dons *tefillin*, he dons the arm-*tefillin* and then dons the head-*tefillin*. When he removes them, he removes the head-*tefillin* and then removes the arm-*tefillin*,” since regarding the clause “they shall be,” there is no difference between donning or removing the *tefillin*.

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<sup>5</sup> {Lit., “a person.” This refers to a classic discussion clarifying two types of obligations. The *gavra* type applies when the *mitzvah* places an obligation on the **person** (“*gavra*”). For example, to shake a *lulav* and *esrog* (all four species) on Succos. In the case of numerous *mitzvos*, however, it is not clear whether the obligation is “on the the *gavra*” or “on the *cheftzah*” (see next fn.)}

<sup>6</sup> {The *cheftzah* type applies when the *mitzvah* consists of an obligation directed at effecting a change in the object. For example, the Torah commands that certain doorways must have a *mezuzah*.}

### 3.

#### DIFFICULTIES WITH THIS APPROACH

It is difficult to explain {the two difficulties raised in section 1} this way because:

[The opening diction of the *Mechilta*, “Any time the arm-*tefillin* are on your arm, **place** the head-*tefillin* on your head,” would be awkward because, according to what was said earlier, it should (have reversed the order of the clauses, and) have said, “**there shall be** the head-*tefillin* on the head any time, etc.” or a similar term. It should have used phraseology which addresses *tefillin* as they are placed on the body, and not which addresses the person donning them. In addition, we find that:]

*Sifri* in *parshas Vaeschanan* uses the same wording as *Mechilta* (“Any time the arm-*tefillin* are on your arm, place the head-*tefillin* on your head. Based on this, they said that when a person dons *tefillin*, he dons the arm-*tefillin* first, and then dons the head-*tefillin*. When he removes them, he removes the head-*tefillin* first, and then removes the arm-*tefillin*”). Nevertheless, *Sifri* derives this teaching from a verse in *parshas Vaeschanan*: “**You shall bind them** for a sign upon your arm, and they shall be for frontlets between your eyes,” which relates to the obligation and *mitzvah* of the person to don *tefillin*.

Another difficulty in the *talmudic* passage itself: After the *Talmud* derives from the word “they shall be” that “as long as the head-*tefillin* are between your eyes, you shall be wearing two {*tefillin*},” we understand similarly that “when he removes his *tefillin*, he removes the head-*tefillin* and then removes the arm-*tefillin*” (as the *Talmud* says). We also understand that “when a person dons *tefillin*, he dons the arm-*tefillin* and then the head-*tefillin*” (as *Mechilta* teaches). Why does the *Talmud* need to expound this from the order that the commandments are given: “You shall bind them for a sign upon your arm and they shall be for frontlets between your eyes?”

## 4.

### MORE QUESTIONS

Seemingly, we can posit this solution: According to the **final** understanding, we indeed derive both rulings — “when a person dons *tefillin*, he dons the arm-*tefillin* and then dons the head-*tefillin*,” and “when he removes his *tefillin*, he removes the head-*tefillin* and then removes the arm-*tefillin*” — from {the *Talmud*’s exposition of} the verse, “They shall be for frontlets between your eyes...”: “As long as the head-*tefillin* are between your eyes, you shall be wearing two {*tefillin*}.” We find, in fact, this position adopted by a number of halachic decisors.<sup>7</sup> Understood this way, this {teaching} also conforms to the above mentioned *Sifri*.

According to this exposition, however, the above difficulty is even more perplexing: Since, ultimately the *Talmud* derives both rulings from one teaching (“they shall be”) like *Mechilta*, why does the *Talmud* (and *Sifri*) not derive these rulings from the earlier verse in *parshas Bo* (like *Mechilta*)?

We must also clarify the two methods {the *Talmud/Sifri* or *Mechilta*} of deriving these laws — do they differ {only} regarding the source of their rulings, or, is there a practical halachic difference depending on which verse serves as the source?

We also find discrepancies between *Mechilta* and *Sifri*:

- a) In *Mechilta*, the wording is, “Based on this, they said that **the mitzvah of tefillin is**, etc.” *Sifri*, however, says, “Based on this, they said that when **a person dons tefillin**, etc.”
- b) *Sifri* adds, “when a person dons *tefillin*, he dons the arm-*tefillin* **first**, and then dons the head-*tefillin*. When he removes them, he removes

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<sup>7</sup> {In the Hebrew original, “*poskim*.”} See *Arachin* 3b, *Tosafos*, s.v. “*shel yad*”; et al}.

the head-*tefillin* **first**, and then removes the arm-*tefillin*,” unlike *Mechilta* {which omits the word “first”}.

## 5.

### DIFFICULTIES WITH THIS APPROACH

The explanation:

The reason why the arm-*tefillin* must be donned before the head-*tefillin*, even though they are two separate *mitzvos* that are independent of each other, can be understood in several ways:

a) This is a ruling regarding the head-*tefillin*: The *mitzvah* of donning head-*tefillin* is only **fulfilled optimally** when the arm-*tefillin* is on the arm; therefore, donning the arm-*tefillin* must precede the head-*tefillin*.

b) This is a ruling regarding the order in which the ***gavra*** must don *tefillin*: He must don the arm-*tefillin* and then the head-*tefillin*. In other words, this ruling does not relate to the *mitzvah* of head-*tefillin* (or arm-*tefillin*); rather, it relates to the order that a *person* must don them.

A practical halachic difference between these two approaches results if a person donned both pairs of *tefillin* **simultaneously**. According to the first approach — that this ruling only relates to the consummation of the head-*tefillin mitzvah* — he has consummated the *mitzvah* in this instance as well. According to the second approach, however — that this ruling relates to the order in which a person dons *tefillin* — when he dons them simultaneously, the required order is lacking.

Another approach: c) We can understand this ruling as a part of “the *mitzvah* of *tefillin*.” Meaning, the order of donning them — the obligation to precede the arm-*tefillin* — is a part of the *mitzvah* of the arm-*tefillin* and the head-*tefillin* (in circumstances when a person would be obligated to don both sets of *tefillin*).

The practical halachic difference: If one dons the head-*tefillin* before the arm-*tefillin*, is he obligated to remove the *tefillin* and don them a second time in their correct order (first the arm-*tefillin* and then the head-*tefillin*), or is it sufficient for him to remove the arm-*tefillin* later?

As known, there is a dispute between the *poskim*<sup>8</sup> and *Achronim*<sup>9</sup> in this matter.

According to the first approach — that the ruling only relates to the optimal fulfilment of the *mitzvah* of head-*tefillin* — since the head-*tefillin* are on his head, he does not need to remove them, and it is sufficient for him to don the arm-*tefillin* immediately and thereby fulfil the head-*tefillin* obligation in the ideal manner.

However, according to the third approach<sup>10</sup> — that this ruling relates to the {general} *mitzvah* of *tefillin* — it is clear that he must remove the head-*tefillin* and re-don them in their correct order.

## 6.

### DONNING *TEFILLIN* TWICE

This is the distinction between the *Talmud's* exposition, “As long as the head-*tefillin* are between your eyes, you shall be wearing two {sets of *tefillin*}” and *Mechilta's* exposition, “Based on this, they said that the *mitzvah* of *tefillin* is such that when a person dons *tefillin*, he dons the arm-*tefillin* and then dons the head-*tefillin*. When he removes them etc.”:

The exposition, “As long as the head-*tefillin* are between your eyes, you shall be wearing two {*tefillin*}” is a ruling regarding the head-*tefillin*. The need to begin with the arm-*tefillin* (“you shall be wearing two”) relates

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<sup>8</sup> {Leading authorities of Jewish law.}

<sup>9</sup> {Foremost (“later”) rabbinic authorities from the 1500s and on.}

<sup>10</sup> Regarding the second approach, see sec. 7, below.

to the ideal fulfillment of the *mitzvah* of the head-*tefillin* (“are between your eyes”). Therefore, if a person dons the head-*tefillin* before the arm-*tefillin*, donning the arm-*tefillin* afterward suffices. Doing so suffices because he is now fulfilling the obligation that “as long as the head-*tefillin* are between your eyes, you shall be wearing two {sets of tefillin}.”

According to *Mechilta*, however, “(Based on this, they said that) **the mitzvah of tefillin** is such that when a person dons *tefillin*, he dons the arm-*tefillin* and then dons the head-*tefillin*.” Giving precedence to the arm-*tefillin* is linked to the {general} *mitzvah* of *tefillin*. Therefore, should a person don the head-*tefillin* first, he has not fulfilled a requirement of “the *mitzvah* of *tefillin*,” and he must remove the head-*tefillin* and don them correctly.

## 7.

### A CONTINUOUS EFFECT

According to the second approach mentioned above — that this requirement only relates to the order in which a *person* must don *tefillin* — there is reason to consider {the following two approaches:} Is this ruling only a condition of, or a detail in, the order that a person dons *tefillin* which is irrelevant to the *mitzvah* of *tefillin* {itself}? As a condition (like most of the “conditions” of *mitzvos*), this would not necessarily impede fulfillment of the *mitzvah* after the fact. If so, if a person dons the head-*tefillin* first, it would be sufficient for him to don the arm-*tefillin* afterward, and then he will have adequately fulfilled the *mitzvah*.

On the other hand, we can say that the requirement regarding the **order** of donning the *tefillin* extends beyond the time he puts on the *tefillin*. So as the *tefillin* continues to be worn, it is a continuation of the donning of head-*tefillin* **without** the preceding donning of the arm-*tefillin*. Therefore, he must remove his head-*tefillin* and don the *tefillin* in the correct order.

We propose that the *Talmud*'s exposition — “Rav Huna **clarified** for me (that removing the head-*tefillin* first is learnt from) the verse states, ‘You shall bind them for a sign upon your arm, and they shall be for frontlets between your eyes’: As long as the head-*tefillin* are between your eyes, you shall be wearing two {*tefillin*}” — understands that the first teaching regarding the order of donning them (“when a person dons *tefillin*, he dons the arm-*tefillin* and then dons the head-*tefillin*... as it says {in Scripture},<sup>11</sup> ‘You shall bind them for a sign upon your arm,’ and then it says, ‘And they shall be for frontlets between your eyes’”) is only a condition in a person’s act of donning *tefillin* and not a part of the *mitzvah* of *tefillin* itself. The **mitzvah** of *tefillin* requires only that “As long as the head-*tefillin* are between your eyes, you shall be wearing two {*tefillin*}.”

Regarding this {*Talmudic* discussion}, *Sifri* (where this ruling is also derived from “You shall bind them...”) adds: “Any time the arm-*tefillin* are on your arm, **place the head-*tefillin*** on your head. Based on this, they said that when a person dons *tefillin*, he dons the arm-*tefillin* first, and then dons the head-*tefillin*.” According to the *Talmud*, the only prerequisite is that the *tefillin* should be on your head **the entire time** that between your eyes, there are two {*tefillin*}. Meaning, the need for the donning of the arm-*tefillin* to precede the head-*tefillin* is only so that there should be “two” as long as they are “between your eyes.”

According to *Sifri*, however, {to fulfil the *mitzvah*} it is critical for the head-*tefillin* to (not only be on the head at the same time the arm-*tefillin* is on the arm, but also to) be donned in the correct **order**: “**Place the head-*tefillin*** on your head.” Therefore, “he dons the arm-*tefillin* **first**” in order that {the directive to} “place the head-*tefillin* on your head” is fulfilled correctly.

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<sup>11</sup> *Devarim* 6:8.

## 8.

### THE WORDS OF THE VERSE

In light of the above, we also understand why *Mechilta* derives this ruling from the earlier verse in the portion of “*kadesh*” {in *parshas Bo*}, “They shall be for you as a sign on your arm” (and also not from the verse, “They shall be as a sign on your arm” in the portion “*vehayah*”<sup>12</sup> at the end of *parshas Bo*): According to *Mechilta*, the order of donning *tefillin* is a ruling regarding the “*mitzvah* of *tefillin*” and not merely a ruling regarding the act of donning of the *gavra* or the optimal fulfillment of the head-*tefillin mitzvah*. [Thus, the wording of *Mechilta* is “Based on this, they said that the *mitzvah* of *tefillin* is such that when a person dons *tefillin*, he dons the arm-*tefillin* and then dons the head-*tefillin*,” and not more succinctly, “Based on this, they said that the arm-*tefillin* are donned **first**.” *Mechilta* maintains that the requirement to don the arm-*tefillin* first is not merely to fulfill the condition that “as long as the head-*tefillin* are between your eyes, you shall be wearing two {sets of *tefillin*},” or, the condition relating the manner that a person should “place the head-*tefillin* on the head.” Rather, this ruling relates to the *mitzvah* of *tefillin* itself.]

Therefore, *Mechilta* derives this rule from the first appearance of the *mitzvah* of *tefillin* in Scripture, indicating that this fundamental rule {the order of donning them} was conveyed together with the actual commandment of *tefillin*.

One might add that the source of this detail {of donning the *tefillin* in a distinct order} is a rule intrinsic to “the *mitzvah* of *tefillin*” — a part of the actual *mitzvah* itself — it is not based only on the order of the verse, but on the *wording* of the verse:

The verse, “They shall be for you as a sign on your arm and a remembrance between your eyes” does not repeat the phrase “they shall be”<sup>13</sup> {in the second clause}. From this, they derive (in the works of the

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<sup>12</sup> {One of the four portions of Scripture placed in the *tefillin*.}

<sup>13</sup> {This denotes that they are both part of the same clause.}

*Rishonim*<sup>14</sup>): “Both are considered as a single entity and a single act.”<sup>15</sup> Halachically, however, we follow the opinion that maintains that the order of *tefillin* is derived from the verse, “You shall bind them... they shall be for frontlets...” Consequently, they are only “considered as a single entity and a single act” regarding the requirement that “a person must don the two *tefillin* {i.e., the arm- and head-*tefillin*} consecutively, without any interrupting pause.”

But according to *Mechilta*, donning both arm- and head-*tefillin* constitutes “a single entity and a single act” in the full sense.

Consequently, it is clear that should a person deviate (from donning the *tefillin* in the correct order), then the *arm-* and *head-tefillin* are not “a single entity and single act” as required by the verse; therefore, the person must don the *tefillin* again in the correct order.

## 9.

### SERVICE OF THE ARM AND THE HEAD

All concepts in the “revealed part of *Torah*”<sup>16</sup> are reflected also in the “inner part of *Torah*.”<sup>17</sup> (On the contrary, the concepts in the “revealed part of *Torah*” evolve from the way they exist in the “inner part of *Torah*.”) Similarly, in our discussion:

The entire *Torah* is juxtaposed {as it were} to *tefillin*.<sup>18</sup> Just as *tefillin* is comprised of the *arm-tefillin* and the *head-tefillin*, the *avodah* of *Torah*-study and *mitzvah*-observance {contain two dimensions} corresponding to the two levels of *tefillin*: The *arm-tefillin*, which are

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<sup>14</sup> {Foremost, (“early”) rabbinic authorities from the 11th-15th century.}

<sup>15</sup> {In the Hebrew original, “*havayeh ve’asiyah achas.*”}

<sup>16</sup> {Commonly referred to as “*nigleh*,” lit., “revealed.” This constitutes Scripture, *Mishnah*, *Talmud*, and Jewish law, etc., as opposed to the esoteric areas of *Torah*.}

<sup>17</sup> {Commonly referred to as “*pnimiyus*”; lit., “inner.” This constitutes the teachings of *Kabbalah* and *Chassidus*.}

<sup>18</sup> *Kiddushin* 35a. {The juxtaposition of these two *mitzvos* in Scripture suggests an equivalence on some level.}

placed on the **arm** near the **heart**, corresponds to the *avodah* of the heart — fear of Hashem and *kabbalas ol*.<sup>19</sup> The head-*tefillin*, placed on the head, corresponds to intellectual *avodah* — understanding and grasping {G-dliness}.

[This concept is stressed in the ruling found in the “revealed part of Torah,” in *Shulchan Aruch*,<sup>20</sup> that fulfilling **the mitzvah of tefillin** — “**placing them** on the arm near the heart and on the head near the mind — is in order to remember the miracles and wonders that Hashem has done for us, signifying His Oneness, His power, and His reign, etc. A person must **subjugate** his soul, which is in his **brain**, and his **heart’s desires** and thoughts, to serve Hashem. By wearing the *tefillin*, a person will **remember** the blessed Creator and **minimize his own pleasures.**”]

Generally, these are the two concepts: Feelings, and emotions felt in a person’s heart {correspond to} *mitzvos* and correlate to the arm-*tefillin*; Torah study correlates to the head-*tefillin*.

## 10.

### TWO LESSONS

There are two lessons we can learn from all of the above: “When a person dons *tefillin*, he dons the arm-*tefillin* and then dons the head-*tefillin*” teaches us that “his fear of sin” must “precede his wisdom.”<sup>21</sup> Fear {of Hashem} is a “gateway... to wisdom.”<sup>22</sup>

As explained in *Tanya* at length, “the beginning of *avodah*, and its core, and its root” is “to first arouse the innate fear which lies hidden in the heart of every Jew not to rebel against the Supreme King of kings, the Holy One, blessed is He....”<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> {Lit., “accepting the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven,” connoting an unequivocal commitment to Hashem.}

<sup>20</sup> Alter Rebbe’s *Shulchan Aruch*, loc cit., par. 11, citing *Shulchan Aruch*, “*Orach Chaim*,” 25:5.

<sup>21</sup> *Avos* 3:9.

<sup>22</sup> *Zohar*, vol. 1, p. 7b; see *Nitzutzei Zohar*, ad. loc.

<sup>23</sup> *Tanya*, ch. 41.

Then, there is the second, loftier lesson: “As long as the head-*tefillin* are between your eyes, you shall be wearing two {*tefillin*}.” The *avodah* of *yiras Hashem*<sup>24</sup> not only serves as a **precursor** to Torah study; but also during the course of Torah study (the intellectual *avodah* of understanding and grasping of G-dliness) a person must engage in the *avodah* of *yirah*, for then, “his wisdom will endure.”<sup>25</sup> [In this way, a person will achieve an even greater level of *yiras Hashem* by means of his Torah study (compared with the *yirah* that **preceded** his Torah study). Regarding this level of *yiras Hashem*, it says,<sup>26</sup> “If there is no wisdom, then there is no *yirah*,” and as the verse says, “Hashem commanded us to do all of these laws in order to have *yirah* for Him.”<sup>27</sup> This is {referred to as} the level of *higher yirah*,<sup>28</sup> which is specifically achieved after the *avodah* of wisdom, as explained at length in *Chassidus*.<sup>29</sup>

## 11.

### HASHEM'S TEFILLIN

Regarding the above, one may add: The need for the arm-*tefillin* to be donned before the head-*tefillin* — his fear precedes his wisdom — is not only because this must be the order of a person's *avodah*. Namely, in order for a person to achieve the optimal level of the *mitzvah* of head-*tefillin* — (the wisdom of) Torah — he must have, as a **prerequisite**, *yiras Hashem* and accept the yoke of Heaven so that “his wisdom will last” — “As long as the head-*tefillin* are between your eyes, you shall be wearing two {*tefillin*}.” [In this way, he will come to achieve an even greater perfection — “if there is no wisdom there is no *yiras Hashem*” — {indicating that the dimension of *yiras Hashem* symbolized by} the “arm-*tefillin*” is also elevated to a higher rung.]

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<sup>24</sup> {“*Yiras Hashem*,” or simply “*yirah*,” connotes fear, awe, and reverence for Hashem.}

<sup>25</sup> *Avos* 3:9.

<sup>26</sup> *Avos* 3:17.

<sup>27</sup> *Devarim* 6:24.

<sup>28</sup> {“*Yirah ilaa*,” in the Hebrew original, in contrast to “*yirah tatah*”, lower fear, or the fear of sin.}

<sup>29</sup> *Tanya*, ch. 23 (end), ch. 43; et al.

Rather, the order itself constitutes part of the “*mitzvah of tefillin.*”

Meaning: The reason why the arm-*tefillin* is donned first is because this is (also) foundational, and possesses an advantage.<sup>30</sup> For “accepting the yoke of Heaven” (*yirah*), even the “lower *yirah*,”<sup>31</sup> represents *bittul*,<sup>32</sup> the opposite of ego. This *yirah* relates to the inherent *bittul* that exists in the essence of the soul, the level of *yechidah*<sup>33</sup> — which surpasses the *avodah* of the head-*tefillin*. This is in line with the teaching of the *Baal Shem Tov*<sup>34</sup> regarding Hashem donning the *tefillin* (first the arm-*tefillin* and then the head-*tefillin*):

Regarding Hashem’s *tefillin*,<sup>35</sup> the “arm-*tefillin*” represents (the service of) simple folk, and the “head-*tefillin*” represents (the service of) Torah scholars. In the order of **donning** Hashem’s *tefillin*, the *avodah* of the acceptance of the yoke of Heaven by simple people comes first, {demonstrating that it is} superior to the *avodah* of scholars with knowledge and understanding of Torah.

By {applying} all of the above, the “*mitzvah of tefillin*” will be fulfilled in an optimal way, as “a **single** entity and a **single** act”: When the idea of “oneness,” the level of *yechidah*,<sup>36</sup> is sensed on the level represented by arm-*tefillin*, then this “oneness” also affects the head-*tefillin*, the *avodah* of scholars, in their knowledge and understanding of *Torah*.

Through this service of “oneness,” we draw down the “One” into this world, “as it says,<sup>37</sup> ‘What is written in Hashem’s *tefillin*... *Who is like Your nation Israel one nation in the land?*’”<sup>38</sup> — the Jewish people bring the “Hashem is **One**” into the land.<sup>39</sup>

— From a talk delivered on *Yud Shvat*, 5737 (1977)

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<sup>30</sup> {Referring to the concept according to which the arm-*tefillin* represents in a person’s general *avodah*, namely, the yoke of Heaven, simple fear of Hashem.}

<sup>31</sup> {*Yirah Tata’a* in the original Hebrew.}

<sup>32</sup> {The concept of self-abnegation to Hashem.}

<sup>33</sup> {The deepest of the five levels of the soul. This can refer to the soul itself, not any of its expressions.}

<sup>34</sup> *Sefer Hasichos*, “Summer 5700,” p. 133.

<sup>35</sup> Which contain praises of the Jewish people (*Berachos* 6a).

<sup>36</sup> *Menachos* 18a, *Tosafos*, s.v. “*ad echad.*”

<sup>37</sup> *Berachos* 6a.

<sup>38</sup> {2 *Shmuel* 7:23.}

<sup>39</sup> *Sefer HaSichos*, loc cit.