

By Rabbi Warren Kasztl

ASSOCIATING TEFILLIN WITH YETZIAS MITZRAYIM  
IN MEMORY OF YITZCHAK BEN CHAIM  
ZECHUS L'REFUAH SHLAYMA FOR  
MEIRAV BAT RACHEL  
SHIFRA YEHUDIS BAS YAFI LEAH

The Shul in which my family davens is blessed with a Rov in his mid-eighties that BA'H has the mind and vitality of a young man. HaRav Dovid Lehrfield, SHLIT'A, (whose younger brother is, HaRav Doniel Lehrfield, SHLIT'A, Rosh Yeshiva of Bais Yisroel in Yerushalayim) gave a drasha last week, after which I promised myself that I would share it with you, my extended family in Eretz HaKedosha.

The ten plagues culminated with the slaying of the first born. Pharaoh, fearing for his own life because he was a bechor, demanded that our people leave immediately. In addition to packing our own things, we are in the process of looting the land, asking our Egyptian neighbors for their gold, silver, and clothing, in addition to our cattle and livestock. The picture strikes us as being filled with commotion and chaos. At this juncture, Hashem gives us the Mitzvah of Tefillin, not just once but twice. The question answered by Rov Lehrfield is obvious. Why in Parashat Bo was this taught now and why was the Mitzvah given twice?

The first time the Mitzvah of Tefillin is mentioned, (13:9), the verse reads, "It shall be for a sign on your hand and for a remembrance between your eyes in order that Hashem's Torah be in your mouth...". Obviously, "in your mouth" means that Torah should be foremost in our minds. What is Hashem's message the first time Tefillin is taught? When we were slaves a few months earlier, especially during the last six months of forced labor when no straw was provided to make bricks, every man had one thing on his mind. "Am I going to make my tally of bricks so that at the end of the day I don't get beaten?" The Tefillin on the arm represents our ability to act while the Tefillin on our head reflects our ability to think. Our entire existence, every thought, every action centered around the work we were required to complete. The day began with the burdensome question, from where were they going to collect straw and quickly morphed into how fast their hands could move. The pressure was intense as every move was being watched by the enemy waiting for an opportunity to use their whip on us. Even during the plagues when work was suspended, the question on everyone's mind was if this break was temporary or was this slavery really coming to a permanent end as promised by Hashem through Moshe.

After two-hundred-ten years, the freedom they had been waiting for finally arrived. The message Hashem conveyed the first time Tefillin was taught was clear. Up until now, every thought, every action revolved around the

# TORAT HAR SHMUEL

By  
TASHMA

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[HARSHMUEL.COM](http://HARSHMUEL.COM) [TASHMA.NET](http://TASHMA.NET)

[sharabymail@gmail.com](mailto:sharabymail@gmail.com) TEL: 0542002882

labor we were required to endure. Our tally of bricks defined our lives. With our freedom, Hashem was telling us that now our focus can be learning Hashem's Torah, through which we have the opportunity to build a relationship with Avinu SheBaShamayim, our Heavenly Father. Instead of being immersed in a totally "chol" based, profaned existence, we now had the opportunity through Hashem's Torah to discover the Ruchniyus within ourselves, our souls, and redefine life on a spiritual level that Yosef HaTzaddik and the Avos before him enjoyed. We could finally be children of Hashem Yisborach.

The lesson derived from the second time Tefillin is taught, (13:16) is different and remarkably important. "And they shall be for a sign upon your hand and for frontlets between your eyes, because with (Hashem's) Mighty Hand were we taken out of Egypt." The word "yodcha – your hand" is spelled strangely, yud, dalet, chof hei. From here, our Sages learn that Tefillin should be placed on "yad kayha", our weaker arm. The musar haskil, the lesson imparted here is priceless. Our arm, and by extension everything we do remains weak until we realize that everything we do, everything we accomplish, every success we enjoy is only because Hashem's Mighty Arm provides us with the strength to move our lives forward in a productive manner. Many define Hashgacha Protis as "Divine Intervention" which is not accurate. It implies that Hashem intervenes in our lives when we don't expect Him to do so. The correct definition for Hashgacha Protis is "Divine Supervision". That supervision is constant, ongoing, reflecting the reality that without Hashem's supervision, we would not be able to move the little finger on either of our hands. Our ability to learn Torah, make

a living, drive a car, THINK, everything, is supervised by Hashem, and what a great Brocho that supervision is. When we wrap our heads around this reality, when we substitute the independence and ego of "B'Kochi v'otzem yodi" for the reality of Hashem's Supervision in our lives, it brings with it a sense of humble confidence that our Father is watching over us so we don't stumble over our own two feet. This is the foundation of Bitachon and Emuna, trust and faith, and it enables us to replace the concept of worry when one thinks they are flying solo with a sense of calm and confidence knowing that, "Kol mon d'ovid Rachmono, l'tav ovid – everything the Merciful One does, for good is it done". Placing our Tefillin on the weaker arm teaches us to connect it to the "Chozek Yad", the Strength of Hashem's outstretched arm that is always there to guide us through life.

Permit me please to close by sharing a personality trait that is a mark of distinction for Rov Lehrfield, SHLIT'A. This brings with it a Brocho for the entire Har Shmuel community. It's one thing for me as a sixty-six-year-old grandfather to be inspired by this man as I am. What moves me is that my grandsons enjoy him as much as I do! Their family had dinner with Rabbi & Rebbetzin Lehrfield a few weeks ago on Shabbos night. (BA'H, the bar of excellence in the Mitzvah of Hachnosas Orchim has belonged to the Rebbetzin for – literally – decades.) I asked my oldest grandson how it was, and he replied, "By the end of the meal, I felt I could call them Bobi & Zedi". This is a consequence of not just getting older but, like wine, getting better. My Brocho to all of you, especially our dear friends HaRav Dovid & Rabbanit Sharaby, SHLIT'A, is that with age, we should all partake of Hashem's Torah to get better rather than just older.