



A Fascinating Revelation from the Megaleh Amukos

All the Nations Fear the Two Shins of the Tefillin Shel Rosh which Contain Seven Heads that Negate the Seven Names of the Yetzer HaRa

In this week's parsha, parshas Ki Savo, it behooves us to explore the incredible sanctity of the tefillin-shel-rosh (Devarim 28, 10): "וראו כל עמי הארץ כי שם ה' נקרא עליך ויראו ממך"—**then all the people of the earth will see that the name of Hashem is proclaimed over you, and they will be in awe of you.** We find the following teaching in the Gemara related to this passuk (Menachos 35b): "אמר רבי אליעזר, אלו תפילין שבראש"—**Rabbi Eliezer said: This refers to the tefillin worn on the head.** The Ba'al HaTurim writes that the tefillin-shel-rosh are alluded to by the following words: "ש'ם יי' נקרא", whose first letters spell "שי", referring to the "shin" of the tefillin. Prior to him, Rabeinu Bachayei wrote: **Here is a reference to the letter "shin" that is a halachah given to Moshe at Sinai; it is as if the passuk says: "All the people of the earth will see that the 'shin' is upon you, and they will be in awe of you."**

Hence, it is worthwhile to focus on several questions raised by the commentaries: (1) What unique feature of the tefillin-shel-rosh instills fear and awe in the other nations [more so than the tefillin-shel-yad]? (2) Why do the other nations fear the letter "shin" embossed on the tefillin-shel-rosh so much? (3) Where do we find that the name **Havaya** is alluded to more by the tefillin-shel-rosh than the tefillin-shel-yad, justifying the statement: **"The name of Hashem is proclaimed over you"?**

The Two Shins of the Tefillin Shel Rosh Contain Seven Heads

We will begin our journey by introducing the illuminating explanation of the Megaleh Amukos regarding Rabbi Elazar's

statement: **"This refers to the tefillin worn on the head."** As is his habit, he provides us with wonderful allusions associated with the tefillin-shel-rosh.

We learn in the Gemara (ibid. 35a): **"The letter "shin" of the tefillin (shel-rosh) is mandated by a halachah given to Moshe at Sinai."** In other words, the leather of the housing of the tefillin-shel-rosh protrudes on each side to form a letter "shin." Citing the Shimusha Rabbah, Tosafos write that the "shin" on the right side of the housing is formed with three heads; while the "shin" on the left side of the housing is formed with four heads. This accords with the halachah as it appears in the Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 32, 42):

"שי"ן של תפילין הלכה למשה מסיני, שיעשה בעור הבתים של ראש כמין שי"ן בולטת מקמטי העור, אחד מימינו ואחד משמאלו. של ימין המניח של ג' ראשים, ושל שמאל המניח של ארבע ראשים."

The Megaleh Amukos explains the significance of these two "shins." In his sefer on Vaeschanan (192), he explains at length a wonderful story in the Gemara (Kiddushin 29b) involving Rav Acha bar Yaakov, who went to learn Torah in the Beis Midrash of Abaye:

"שמע אבוי דקא הוה אתי הוה ההוא מזיק בי רבנן דאבוי דכי הוה עיילי בתרין אפילו ביממא הוה מיתזקי. אמר להו לא ליתבי ליה אינש אושפיזא אפשר דמתרחיש ניסא. על בת בההוא בי רבנן אידמי ליה כתנינא דשבעה רישוותיה [נראה אליו המזיק כמין נחש בעל שבעה ראשים], כל כריעה דכרע נתר חד רישיה. אמר להו למחר, אי לא איתרחיש ניסא סכינתין."

Abaye heard that Rav Acha was coming. There was a certain demon in the Beis Midrash of Abaye. Even two scholars entering together during the light of day would be

harmed. Abaye said to his students, “Do not provide him (Rav Acha) with lodging; thus, he will be compelled to sleep in the Beis Midrash; perhaps a miracle will occur (in the merit of his righteousness, and the demon will be killed).” He (Rav Acha) went and slept in that Beis Midrash; it appeared to him as a seven-headed serpent. He began to pray. Each time he bowed down, one of its heads fell off (after seven bows, all seven heads fell off, and it died). He (Rav Acha) said to them (to Abaye and his students), “If a miracle had not occurred, you would have endangered my life.”

Rav Acha bar Yaakov Learned a Lesson from Yaakov Avinu

The commentaries are perplexed by Abaye’s actions. Why was he so sure that a miracle would occur on Rav Acha’s behalf that would kill the demon? Why wasn’t he concerned for Rav Acha’s well-being? The Megaleh Amukos explains Abaye’s profound reasoning based on the encounter between Yaakov Avinu and Eisav described in parshas Vayishlach (Bereishis 33, 3): **“והוא עבר לפנייהם וישתחו ארצה שבע פעמים עד גשתו עד אחיו” — and he went before them and bowed earthward seven times until he reached his brother.**

The Zohar hakadosh inquires (Vayishlach 171b): How did Yaakov bow down before Eisav? Wasn’t he transgressing the prohibition (Shemos 34, 14): **“לא תשתחוה לאל אחר” — you shall not bow down to another god?** It answers that Yaakov saw that HKB”H passed before them, as indicated by the words: **“And he went before them.”** These words can be interpreted as a reference to HKB”H passing before them. Yaakov bowed down before HKB”H; he wasn’t bowing down before Eisav. Even so, why did HKB”H see fit to pass before them?

The matter can be explained based on what we have learned in the Gemara (Succah 52a): **“שבעה שמות יש לו ליצר” — the yetzer hara has seven appellations;** they represent its seven forces of tumah. Elsewhere, the Gemara indicates that there are (Sotah 10b): **“שבעה מדורי גיהנם” — seven chambers of Gehinnom.** They were designed to punish the reshaim who heeded the advice of the yetzer hara, who has seven names, representing seven distinct forms of tumah. So, when Yaakov encountered Eisav—whose guardian angel is none other than the yetzer hara—HKB”H passed before them, prompting Yaakov to bow down to Him seven times. Thus, he weakened all seven forces of tumah associated with Eisav.

Now, we can posit that Rav Acha learned this tactic from Yaakov Avinu. He bowed down seven times to HKB”H to kill the seven-headed demon, just as his forefather had done to weaken the forces of Eisav. Also, we have learned in the Gemara (Berachos 7b): **“דשמה גרים” — a person’s name reflects on his character and essence.** Thus, the name **Rav Acha bar Yaakov** alludes to the fact that he received the power to vanquish the seven-headed serpent from **Yaakov Avinu.** This explains very nicely why Abaye relied on the fact that a miracle would occur for Rav Acha bar Yaakov, enabling him to kill the demon. He perceived from his name—**“רב אחא בר יעקב” — that he possessed the power of Yaakov Avinu, who subdued Eisav by bowing down seven times.**

To this, the Megaleh Amukos adds an amazing allusion. After Yaakov bowed down seven times, Eisav said to him (Bereishis 33, 9): **“יש לי רב אחי”.** For, upon seeing how Yaakov successfully subdued his seven forces of tumah by bowing down to HKB”H seven times, Eisav uttered prophetically: **“יש לי רב אחי” — alluding to Rav Acha bar Yaakov, who would learn from Yaakov how to exterminate the seven-headed demon.**

In this manner, he interprets the passuk (Mishlei 24, 16): **“כי שבע יפול צדיק וקם” — for though the tzaddik may fall seven times, he will arise.** By **bowing down seven times,** these two tzaddikim—Yaakov Avinu and Rav Acha bar Yaakov—subjugated the seven heads of the evil force and **rose.** In fact, HKB”H insinuates this to the primeval serpent with the pronouncement (Bereishis 3, 15): **“הוא ישוּפך ראש” — he will pound you on the head.** HKB”H is telling the nachash that man will smash its seven heads by bowing down seven times.

Let us add an intriguing tidbit to the words of the Megaleh Amukos. In Sha’ar HaPesukim (Vayigash), the Arizal teaches us that Yaakov Avinu was a gilgul (reincarnation) and tikun of Adam HaRishon. His source is the statement in the Zohar hakadosh (Bereishis 35b): **“דהא יעקב דוגמא דאדם הראשון הוה דיעקב שופריה דאדם הראשון הוה.”** Moreover, our blessed sages allude to this fact in the Gemara (B.M. 84a): **“שופריה דיעקב אבינו מעין” — the magnificence of Yaakov Avinu was a semblance of the magnificence of Adam HaRishon.** As we know, as a consequence of the nachash’s duplicity, Adam HaRishon and all living creatures were sentenced to die. Hence, HKB”H implies to the nachash: **“He will smash your head” — he, specifically, when he (Adam HaRishon) will reincarnate into**

Yaakov Avinu. Then, he will avenge what you have done and will smash your head by bowing down seven times.

The Seven Heads of the Shins on the Tefillin Subjugate the Seven Heads of the Nachash

Now, let us return to the words of the Megaleh Amukos (Beha'aloscha). Based on what we have discussed, he goes on to explain the Gemara's (Shabbas 105b) elucidation of the passuk (Tehillim 81, 10): "לא יהיה בך אל זר ולא תשתחוה לאל נכר, —there shall be no foreign god within you, nor shall you bow before an alien god." What foreign god exists in man's body? You should say that it is the yetzer hara. We can now suggest that the reason the yetzer hara is referred to as a "foreign god" -- "אל זר" —is because the word ז"ר can be interpreted as an abbreviation for ז' ר' אשימ —seven heads—alluding to its seven forces of tumah.

With this in mind, the Megaleh Amukos explains why two "shins" are embossed on the two sides of the tefillin-shel-rosh (one on each side). As we learned above, the "shin" on the right side has three heads, while the "shin" on the left side has four heads. Together, their seven heads weaken and subjugate the seven forces of tumah of the yetzer hara—the "אל זר", the seven-headed demon within us.

We can now rejoice for we have achieved a better understanding of the Megaleh Amukos. He addressed the elucidation of the Tanna, Rabbi Eliezer, related to the passuk in this week's parsha: "וראו כל עמי הארץ כי שם ה' נקרא עליך ויראו" —"then all the people of the earth will see that the name of Hashem is proclaimed over you, and they will be in awe of you." Rabbi Eliezer teaches us that this is a reference to the tefillin worn on the head. We already cited Rabeinu Bachaye and the Ba'al HaTurim who write that the first letters of the words ש"ם י"י נקרא allude to the letter "shin" on the tefillin-shel-rosh. Let us explain based on what we have discussed so far. All the people of the other nations will fear that the seven heads of the two "shins" will annihilate them just as the seven-headed demon was destroyed by Rav Acha bar Yaakov, when he bowed down seven times. This is the gist of his sacred and illuminating words.

It is with great pleasure and delight that we can now apply what we have learned to the following statement by David

HaMelech (Tehillim 119, 161): "שרים רדפוני חנם ומדברך פחד לבי, —princes have pursued me without cause, but from Your word has my heart feared. I rejoice over Your word, like one who finds abundant spoils. According to the Arizal (Sha'ar HaPesukim), the passuk is referring to the princes of the seventy nations of the world. They are called שרי"ם, because the singular ש"ר is an abbreviation for ש'בעה ר'אשימ —seven heads. So, how did David HaMelech overcome and defeat the princes of the seventy nations? "שש אנכי על אמרתך".

We can explain his meaning based on what we have learned in the Gemara (Berachos 30b): "אביי הוה יתיב קמיה דרבה, חזייה דהוה —Abaye was sitting before Rabbah. He (Rabbah) noticed that he (Abaye) was very cheerful. He (Rabbah) said: It is written (Tehillim 2, 11): "And rejoice with trepidation." He (Abaye) explained to him: I am wearing tefillin. In his commentary on the Aggados HaShas (homiletic passages in the Talmud), the Gr"a explains that Abaye was referring to the passuk: "שש אנכי על אמרתך". The word ש"ש in this passuk alludes to the two "shins" embossed on the tefillin-shel-rosh. That is why Abaye was so elated; he was wearing tefillin and that caused him to rejoice, in keeping with the words: "שש אנכי". In this same vein, David HaMelech proclaimed: "שש אנכי"—in the merit of the kedushah of the two "shins" on the tefillin-shel-rosh, with their seven heads, I was able to subdue the seven heads of the princes of the nations of the world. This caused him to rejoice.

Amazingly, we can apply what we have learned to what the Reishis Chochmah brings down in the name of the Midrash regarding the passuk (Bereishis 32, 25): "ויותר יעקב לבדו ויאבק" —"and he wrestled with him." They of blessed memory said that this teaches us that he (Eisav's guardian angel) wanted to kill him (Yaakov), but he lacked the power, because Yaakov Avinu was armed with tefillin on his head and on his arm and with Tzitzis on his garment, as it is written: "He saw that he could not defeat him."

Let us provide an explanation based on our current discussion. As we know, the malach wrestling with Yaakov was Eisav's guardian angel. We learn this from the Midrash

Tanchuma (Vayishlach 8): **“וַיִּאבֶּק אִישׁ עִמּוֹ, זֶה סַמְאֵל לְ שָׂרוּ שֶׁל—“a man wrestled with him”;** it was Samael, Eisav’s guardian angel. We also know that he is the yetzer hara, who has seven appellations corresponding to its seven forces of tumah. Therefore, Yaakov cleverly adorned himself with a tallis and tefillin to defeat Eisav’s guardian angel with the seven heads of the two “shins” on the tefillin-shel-rosh.

The Goal of a Jew’s Service Is to Extract the Name Havaya Concealed within Eisav

Following this line of reasoning, we will now endeavor to explain the mention of the name **Havaya** in association with the tefillin-shel-rosh: **“All the people of the earth will see that the name Havaya is proclaimed over you, and they will be in awe of you.”** As we learned, Rabbi Eliezer expounds: **This refers to the tefillin worn on the head.** We will now introduce an explanation from the holy Admor, Sar Shalom of Belz, zy”a. After Yaakov received the Berachos from Yitzchak, it is written (ibid. 27, 38): **“וַיֹּאמֶר עֵשָׂו אֶל אַבְיוֹ הַבְּרִכָּה אַחַת הִיא לְךָ אָבִי—“Is there but one berachah to you, Father? Bless me, too, Father!”**

He explains, in his own inimitable way, that the gematria of **יצח"ק** is eight times **Havaya (208)**. Each one is a berachah onto itself. Now, the gematria of **יעק"ב** is seven times **Havaya**, representing the seven Berachos that he received from his father Yitzchak. This implies that one **Havaya** remained with Yitzchak that was not given to Yaakov. Hence, Eisav beseeched his father politely: **“Is there but one berachah to you, Father?”** After all, there is one **Havaya** that you did not bestow upon Yaakov. So, please, **“Bless me, too, Father!”** This concludes his sacred remarks.

For years, I’ve struggled to comprehend why, indeed, did Yitzchak only bestow seven Berachos from the seven names of **Havaya** upon Yaakov. Why did Yitzchak save the eighth Havaya—to which Eisav refers with the entreaty: **“Is there but one berachah to you, Father? Bless me, too, Father!”** Seemingly, it would have been preferable for him to give Yaakov all eight Berachos from the eight times **Havaya** contained in his name **יצח"ק**; then, nothing would have remained for Eisav.

Nevertheless, as our blessed sages state in the Yerushalmi (R.H. 3, 5): **“דְּבָרֵי תוֹרָה עֲנִיִּים בְּמִקְוֵמוֹן וְעִשְׂרִים בְּמִקְוֵם אַחֵר—“sometimes**

words of Torah are sparse in one place but rich and expansive elsewhere. With the Almighty’s help, I found a wonderful explanation in the Panim Yafos (Vayishlach). He explains the inherent allusion in the passuk: **“הַבְּרִכָּה אַחַת הִיא לְךָ אָבִי—“in the same way Sar Shalom, zy”a, did; however, he explains the matter magnificently in greater detail.**

Eisav Is Sustained by the One Havaya

Our sacred sefarim, based on the Zohar hakadosh (Terumah 158a), teach us that every Jew must strive to serve Hashem with all seven midos emanating from the realm of kedushah. Of these, David HaMelech said (Tehillim 119, 164): **“שִׁבְעַת בְּיוֹם הַלֵּלְתִּיךָ עַל מִשְׁפָּטֵי צְדָקָךָ—“seven times a day I have praised you for your righteous ordinances.** Additionally, the wisest of all men said (Koheles 7, 14): **“גַּם אַתָּה זֶה לְעוֹמֵת זֶה—“Eisav said to his father, “Is there but one berachah to you, Father? Bless me, too, Father!”**

Furthermore, our sacred sefarim teach us, based on the Zohar hakadosh (Vayakheil 215b), that the forces of evil that oppose the forces of kedushah receive their sustenance from the realm of kedushah. Seeing as HKB”H is the one and only true force in the universe, it is impossible for anything to exist without receiving its sustenance from the realm of kedushah. It is the “nitzotzei kedushah”—sparks of holiness—that fell into the hands of the forces of tumah that sustain them and will continue to do so until the time of the geulah. At that time, HKB”H will deprive them of that sustenance and they will be rendered lifeless corpses.

With this introduction, we will now return to the explanation of the Panim Yafos. Eight times **Havaya** are alluded to by the name **יצח"ק**. Since Yaakov personified the seven midos of kedushah, it was fitting for him to receive seven Berachos from seven times **Havaya**. For this reason, the gematria of the name Yaakov equals seven times **Havaya**. In contrast, the wicked Eisav personified the seven midos of the klipah; as such, he did not deserve any berachah from the seven times **Havaya**. Yet, to continue to exist, even Eisav required sustenance from the realm of kedushah; otherwise,

he would have vanished completely prior to his scheduled eradication at the time of the future geulah. Therefore, one **Havaya** remained with Yitzchak, which was necessary to sustain Eisav.

In this manner, the Panim Yafos explains the allusions inherent in the names **עשׂו** and **יעקב**. The name **Yaakov** alludes to the fact that he received seven times **Havaya** from Yitzchak. The name **Eisav**, on the other hand, reflects the fact that he personified the seven midos of tumah, but was sustained by the one **Havaya**. Hence, the gematria of seven times **טמ"א** (350), plus the gematria of one **Havaya** (26), equals 376—the gematria of **עשׂו**. This explains very nicely Eisav's entreaty: **"Don't you have one berachah left for me, Father?"** Since you gave seven Berachos to Yaakov—as alluded to by the gematria of the name **יעקב**—you still have one **Havaya** left. Therefore: **"Bless me, too, father"**—give me the one remaining **Havaya**, so that I will be sustained by the realm of kedushah. Otherwise, I will perish. These are his sacred words.

Based on what we have learned from the Panim Yafos, we can shed some light on a statement in the Gemara (B.K. 23b): **"אֲרֵס נָחֹשׁ בֵּין שִׁנָּיו הוּא עוֹמֵד"**—**the venom of the snake lies between its teeth**. We find an explanation in the Kol Eliyahu (ibid.), in the name of the Gr"a of Vilna, zy"a, based on the Midrash (S.R. 3, 12): **"שֶׁאֵין נָחֹשׁ מִמִּית אֲלֵא הַחַטָּא מִמִּית"**—**it is not the snake that kills but rather the sin that kills**. The Gr"a provides us with a wonderful allusion. The middle letters of the two words **נָחֹשׁ** (snake) and **שֶׁטָן** (Satan) are **"ches"** and **"tet."** The remaining letters are two set of **שׁוּן** (meaning tooth). This then is the meaning of the statement: **"The venom of the snake lies between its teeth."** The snake's capacity to kill comes from the letters **ח"ט** (the essential letters of the word for sin), which are located between **"its teeth"**—the two sets of **שׁוּן** that remain after removing the letters **ח"ט** from **נָחֹשׁ** and **שֶׁטָן**. This concludes his sacred remarks.

Notwithstanding, we must still endeavor to explain the significance of the letters **שׁוּן** that surround the letters **ח"ט**. Based on what we have learned, we can suggest that the letters **שׁוּן** allude to the gematria of seven times **טמ"א**—representing the seven forces of tumah controlled by the nachash and the Satan. Their sustenance, however, comes from Yisrael's sins. Thus, the letters **ח"ט** (alluding to sin) insinuate themselves

between the **"shin"** and the **"nun"** to form **נח"ש** and **שט"ן**. Based on this idea we can suggest an allusion in the passuk (Tehillim 124, 6): **"ברוך ה' שלא נתגנו טרף לשיניהם"**—**blessed is Hashem, Who did not present us as prey for their teeth**. Their teeth are the two sets of **שׁוּן** in the names **נח"ש** and **שט"ן**; the reshaim use them to bite the forces of kedushah.

It Is a Jew's Task to Extract the Name Havaya from Eisav

Our sacred sefarim teach us that our primary task is to extract the sparks of kedushah that lie within the domain of the klipos. The Toldos Yaakov Yosef writes (Yisro): **We know that the main purpose of all our service in Torah, tefilah, intent of the mitzvos and intent of eating is to refine and elevate the "nitzotzei kedushah" from the depths of the klipos**. Now, seeing as the eighth **Havaya**, which sustains the wicked Eisav, represents sparks of kedushah that have fallen into the realm of the klipah, it is incumbent upon us to extract it from him and return it to the realm of kedushah.

In truth, as long as we have not merited the complete tikun associated with the future geulah, it is not within our power to extract the name **Havaya** from Eisav. Le'asid la'vo, however, HKB"H will retrieve the eighth **Havaya** that sustains Eisav and return it to the realm of kedushah. This is the implication of the passuk related to the future geulah (Yeshayah 52, 8): **כִּי "עֵין בְּעֵין יִרְאוּ בְּשׁוּב יְהוָה צִיּוֹן"**—**with their own eyes they will see that Havaya returns to Tziyon**. In other words, Yisrael will witness that even the name **Havaya** that has sustained Eisav will be returned to the realm of kedushah.

Now, this illuminates for us the meaning of the passuk: **"Then all the people of the earth will see that the name of Hashem is proclaimed over you, and they will be in awe of you"**—which Rabbi Eliezer expounds as a reference to the tefillin-shel-rosh. We learned from the Megaleh Amukos that the nations of the world specifically fear the two **"shins"** of the tefillin-shel-rosh—alluded to by the words **שׁוּן י"י נִקְרָא**. For, together, they have seven heads which are able to subdue the seven heads of the forces of tumah. Now, if we combine this with the insight of the Panim Yafos, it is apparent that by means of the tefillin-shel-rosh we are able to subdue the seven times **טמ"א** of Eisav.

Accordingly, when we merit totally abolishing the seven times טמ"א of **Eisav**—via the two “shins” with their seven heads—we will also succeed in retrieving the name **Havaya** that sustains him and returning it to the realm of kedushah. This is the implication of the passuk (Ovadiah 1, 21): “ועלו מושעים בהר ציון לשפוט את הר עשו והיתה להוי"ה המלוכה”—**and saviors will ascend Har Tziyon to judge the Mountain of Eisav, and the kingdom will be Hashem’s**. In other words, by retrieving the name **Havaya** that was buried within the name **Eisav**, the kingship will return to **Havaya**.

Thus, the passuk teaches us that in the merit of the tefillin-shel-rosh—with the seven heads of its two “shins”—we are capable of abolishing the seven forces of tumah associated with the seven times טמ"א in Eisav’s name. As a result, the name **Havaya** in his name will be returned to the realm of kedushah. Therefore, all the nations of the world are so in awe of the tefillin-shel-rosh, because it represents the termination of their sustenance with the arrival of the future geulah—swiftly, in our times! Amen.

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