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.YARCHEI KALLAH

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אין בית המדרש בלא
חידוש Chiddush



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Removing darkness to find the light

Learning Gemara is difficult. Even for the seasoned student, it can take a life-time to master. One of the reasons it is so challenging is because of its complex structure.

The process of Talmud Bavli (Gemara) involves questions, challenges, postulations and refutations, contradictions and resolutions. We call this the *שקלא וטריא*, the give-and-take or back-and-forth of the Talmudic debate.

The ultimate objective is to come to the conclusion, which is clarity on the issue under discussion or the Halachic ruling. But in order to get to the resolution one needs to wade through pages of arguments and analysis which can be confusing.

Our sages describe the Talmud Bavli using the verse *במחשכים הושיבני*, "He has caused me to dwell in darkness". This was meant as a criticism of the style of study in Bavel. The darkness represents the confusion and lack of clarity reflected in the arguments and questioning.

This is in contrast to the Talmud Yerushalmi. In the Yerushalmi the Halacha is clearly enunciated and there is no questioning and little argument. If the Bavli is "darkness", the Yerushalmi is "light".

This would suggest that the Talmud Yerushalmi is superior to the Bavli.

Yet, the bulk of Torah study and Halachic deduction is from the Bavli. And when there is a discrepancy between the two Talmuds, Halacha is like the Bavli.

One of the reasons for this is because having to answer and resolve the questions and challenges brings us to a greater clarity on the Halacha.

The process of coming to the Halachic conclusion is referred to as *ליבון הלכתא*, clarifying the Halacha. The word *לבן* (white) comes from the word *לבן* (white). Through the process we remove the darkness to reveal the white light of truth.

The darkness itself is not the objective. But it is only through the darkness that the true objective of greater light can be achieved. And in doing so, the darkness itself is pushed away.

At the end of the Parsha, as Eliezer is bringing Rivka back to marry Yitzchak, the Torah tells us *ויצא יצחק לשוח בשדה לפנות ערב*, "and Yitzchak went out to converse in the field towards evening." our sages explain that he was davening Mincha which is said towards evening.

The word *לשוח* means to converse. It is also related to *שחיה* which means to bend down. The word *לפנות* can also mean to remove.

The field refers to the teachings known as *Braisa*. Literally meaning "outside" (because they were left out of the Mishna), the *Braisa* teaches the details of the Halachos and is an integral part of the Talmudic debate in clarifying the Mishna's rulings. Relative to the Mishna which is likened to the city, the *Braisa* is like the fields outside the city walls.

So, on a deeper level, the verse can be read "and Yitzchak descended down into the *Braisa* in order to remove the darkness (evening)."

This brings about the fulfilment of the prophesy of Zecharia *לעת ערב יהיה אור*, towards evening (from the darkness) there will be light.

We can apply this concept in our own lives as well. We all experience moments of darkness and being on "the outside". We suffer times of confusion and lack of clarity. We face challenges, suffering, difficulty and hardship.

Hidden in these experiences of darkness is a greater light - greater strength and resilience, triumph and growth. If we never had to face darkness, we would never have been able to reveal and actualise these deeper strengths.

If you want to remove something, you have to go down and get involved with it, but the objective is not to remain there.

We have to face the darkness of the field, not because we want to be there, but because only by working to overcome it, will we be able to remove the darkness and discover and unleash the greater light.

Tallis or Tefillin? Which comes first? - Part 2

Rabbi Yonason Johnson

As discussed in last week's edition, accepted Halacha and practise is that we put on the Tallis before putting on Tefillin. This requirement leads to some additional practical considerations.

When only wearing Tefillin

If one only has time to do one of the Mitzvos at the present time - either Tallis or Tefillin, Tefillin take precedence. Even though Tallis is the more frequent Mitzvah, Tefillin have greater Kedusha²⁵.

Similarly if one only wishes to put on Tefillin, they need not put the Tallis on first. This is relevant for those who follow the Middas Chassidus of putting on Tefillin and reciting the Shema at home before davening (so as not to recite Shema without Tefillin²⁶)²⁷.

Tefillin and Tallis in the same bag

When the Tallis and Tefillin are kept in the same bag, *Lechatchila* the Tallis should be placed above the Tefillin. If the Tallis would be placed underneath the Tefillin, one would have to be *מעביר על המצוה*, to 'pass over' the Mitzvah of Tefillin in order to put the Tallis on first²⁸. 'Passing over' a Mitzvah at hand, even to do another Mitzvah is problematic.

In the event that the Tefillin were placed above the Tallis, the Tefillin should be put on before the Tallis²⁹. This is because the requirement to put the Tallis on first is only based on an *Asmachta*. Whereas not 'passing over' a Mitzvah is a Biblically mandated Torah rule.

(The *Ta"z*³⁰ notes that this is unlike the laws of Tefillin themselves. Tefillin Shel Yad is donned before Tefillin Shel Rosh. Therefore the Tefillin should be stored in their bag with the Tefillin Shel Yad slightly above the Tefillin Shel Rosh so that it will be the first to be removed.

If the Tefillin Shel Rosh was placed on top of the Shel Yad, one must still put on the Tefillin Shel Yad first, even though they are 'passing over' the Tefillin Shel Rosh³¹. This is because the Torah expressly teaches that Tefillin Shel Yad must be put on first.)

Magen Avraham³² writes that where the Tefillin were placed on top of the Tallis, the Tefillin are only put on first if they were not in

their own separate bag. If the Tefillin were in a separate bag, the Tallis should still be put on first as it is not considered being *מעביר על המצוה*.

The Mishna Berura³³ writes that the other Acharonim³⁴ do not make an exception and *מעביר על המצוה* would apply even if the Tefillin were in a separate bag. Therefore, he concludes that one cannot follow the leniency of the Magen Avraham, even if it will be embarrassing for him to put Tefillin on before the Tallis.

The Alter Rebbe³⁵ however does bring the ruling of the Magen Avraham as Halacha.

According to Kabbalah, the requirement to put the Tallis before Tefillin is so strong, that even where one took out the Tefillin first, one should 'pass over' the Tefillin to first put on the Tallis. Further, even if one had put on Tefillin already, he should remove the Tefillin, put on the Tallis and then put the Tefillin on again³⁶. Halacha does not follow the view of the Mekubalim.

All of the above only applies when one intends to put on both Tallis and Tefillin at that time. If one is only planning on putting on the Tallis, they may do so even when 'passing over' the Tefillin³⁷.

Some Acharonim suggest that one can put on the Tallis and recite some Tefillos or Tehillim. This creates a *hefsek* and one may then put on the Tefillin at the later point even if they were on top of the Tallis.

Which should you buy first?

A side discussion but related to the topic:

Kneses Hagedola writes that since Tallis takes precedence, being the more frequent Mitzvah, if one only has the ability to buy either Tefillin or a Tallis, they should first purchase a Tallis.

The Acharonim argue with this ruling and write that even though Tallis is put on first, purchasing Tefillin takes precedence. They offer different reasons;

- Our sages teach that one who does not put on Tefillin *קרקפתא דלא מנח תפילין* is considered a rebellious sinner³⁸ *פושעי ישראל* (בגופן). We don't find the same status of severity regarding the Mitzvah of Tallis.
- Tzitzis is an 'optional' Mitzvah because technically it only applies if one is wearing a four-cornered garment. In contrast, Tefillin is a

binding obligation that one must fulfill³⁹.

- Tefillin have greater Kedusha than Tallis⁴⁰.

Shaarei Teshuva⁴¹ writes that only Tefillin Shel Rashi should be procured before a Tallis. However, Tefillin of Rabbeinu Tam which are not worn by most people, would not take precedence over Tzitzis.

Wearing Tallis and Tefillin to Shule

Last week we referenced the practise according to Kabbalah⁴² of walking to Shule while 'crowned' with Tallis and Tefillin as quoted in Shulchan Aruch⁴³.

If one is unable to walk to Shule wearing Tallis and Tefillin because one needs to pass through unclean places or if one is afraid of non-Jews in the street, they should be put on in the courtyard of the Shule before entering the Shule itself⁴⁴. This too is in keeping with the words of the Zohar⁴⁵.

Nowadays, very few people wear their Tallis and Tefillin to Shule, likely due to the above considerations. However at the very least one should put on their Tallis and Tefillin before entering the Shule – either in the courtyard or foyer or other side room. Yet it seems that most people do not do this either. Why they do not remains a question.

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| 25. Os Chaim Veshalom | Shu"t Torah Lishma Ben Ish Chai Siman 1 |
| 26. Brachos 14b. Reciting Shema which mentions the Mitzvah of Tefillin while one is not wearing Tefillin, is considered as they are bearing false witness on themselves. | 37. Mishna Berura 25:3 and Aruch Hashulchan 25:4 |
| 27. There are those who maintain that according to Kabbalah of the Ariza"l, in all instances the Tallis should be put on before Tefillin. | 38. Olat Tamid |
| 28. Shulchan Aruch 25:1 | 39. Elya Rabbah |
| 29. Shulchan Aruch 25:1 and Ta"z | 40. Beis Hillel |
| 30. 25:1. This distinction is also brought by Beis Yosef | 41. OC 25:1 |
| 31. OC 66 | 42. Zohar volume 3 p265. One who does so is accompanied by 4 angels who bless him. |
| 32. Magen Avraham 25:1 | 43. OC 25:2. Both the Mechaber and Ram"o bring this practise. The only difference is that the Mechaber requires only that the Tallis Katan be put on at home. The Tallis Gadol is put on in Shule. According to the Ram"o, the practise is also to put on the Tallis Gadol at home. |
| 33. Biur Halacha יניח ד"ה שלא יניח | 44. Magen Avraham 25:5, quoted in Mishna Berura 25:8 |
| 34. Levush, Ta"z, Bach and Beis Yosef. This is also the view of Elya Rabbah and Aruch Hashulchan. | 45. Shulchan Aruch Harav 25:8 |
| 35. 25:3 | |
| 36. See Kaf Hachaim 25:7 and | |