

The Weekly Daf



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Shabbos 58-64

Week of 28 Teves-5 Shevat 5758 / 26 January-1 February 1998
Rav Weinbach's insights, explanations and comments for the 7 pages of Talmud
studied in the course of the worldwide Daf Yomi cycle

When Left is Right

Which shoe do you put on first, right or left?

In a *beraisa* we are taught that the right comes first. The basis for this is the Torah's command (*Shmos 29:20 and Vayikra 14:14*) regarding a *kohen's* inauguration and a *metzora's* purification, to place sacrificial blood upon the thumb of his right hand and the big toe of his right foot.

Rabbi Yochanan, on the other hand, sees a reason for favoring the left foot from the fact that the Torah directed us to place our *tefillin* on the "weaker arm" (*Shmos 13:16*) — the left.

"The man who fears Heaven," said Rabbi Nachman bar Yitzchak, "fulfills both views."

He was referring to the Sage Mar, the son of Ravana, who found a way of accommodating both views. He first put on his right shoe but did not tie it. Then he put on the left shoe and tied it before proceeding to tie the right one.

This seems like a perfect compromise which gives each foot precedence at one stage. But what if you wear shoes which have no laces — which shoe do you then put on first?

Tosefos offers a simple resolution to this problem. Rabbi Yochanan never intended to give the left foot precedence in anything else but *tying* the laces, because only in regard to "*tying* them on your arm" did the Torah designate the left arm as the one where the *tefillin* are placed. Where no tying is necessary, the left foot no longer has any primary status and it is the right shoe which goes on first.

This explanation is the basis for the halacha codified in *Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim (2:4)* which has become the daily practice of most observant Jews. But if you are a lefty who ties his *tefillin* on his right arm, add the halachic authorities, you should also tie your right shoe first.

An interesting extension of the precedence given to the right foot applies to the custom for the *chasan* at a wedding to break a glass at the end of the *chupah*, which recalls the destruction of the *Beis Hamidkash* at the height of his joy. He does so with his right foot because this is an act in which there is no element of tying and is therefore the domain of the right foot.

Shabbos 61a

What Goes in the Worlds to Come

"They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not lift sword against nation, nor shall they learn war any more."

This prophecy of Micha (4:3) is the vision which has inspired all those who seek universal peace. But when is it scheduled for its ultimate fulfillment?

One opinion of the Sages is that the Prophet Micha was referring to the days of Mashiach. This led the proponents of this view to conclude that weapons are only a necessary evil in an imperfect world, and can therefore not be considered an adornment for the one who bears arms. This is the position expressed in the *mishna* which declares that it is forbidden for a man to carry a sword or spear in the street on Shabbos.

In contrast to this approach is the declaration of the Sage Shmuel. Shmuel stated that the only significant difference between today and the days of Mashiach is that then Jewry will not be subservient to other nations. Wars between those other nations, however, will continue to be waged until a period called the "World to Come" when Micha's prophecy of weapons converted into agricultural instruments will be fulfilled.

But when we speak of the "World to Come" we conjure up an image of a world in which there is no eating or drinking or any physical activity, as the Sage Rav describes it in *Mesechta Berachos (17a)*. What need is there in such a spiritual world for agricultural tools?

Maharsha solves this problem by distinguishing between the finite period following the resurrection of the dead, when there will still be a physical world, and the infinite world of souls which follows it. Micha's prophecy of peace will be fulfilled in that post-resurrection era when man still needs to eat, and it promises him the ability to cultivate his food without fear of war. This "World to Come" comes after resurrection. It will be followed in due time by an even more perfect "World to Come" when the only activity will be to delight in the glory of the Divine Presence.

Shabbos 63a

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