

# SIMAN 42: WHETHER IT IS PERMITTED TO CHANGE HAND-TFILLIN TO HEAD-TFILLIN

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**42.1:** It is forbidden to change head-tfillin to make them (1) hand-tfillin, even to take a (2) strap (3) from head-tfillin and put them on hand-tfillin, because "We do not lower something from a strict [great] holiness to a light [small] holiness", and the sanctity of head-tfillin is strict [greater], for the majority of the word "Sha-dai" [2 of 3 letters] (4) is in the head- tfillin; but from hand-tfillin to head-tfillin (5) it is permitted to change. And if they were new and he had (6) never put them on, it is permitted to change even from head-tfillin to hand-tfillin, meaning that he should cover the tfillin with a covering made of a single skin, and it appears (7) like a single bayit [compartment, instead of 4 batim (which is the way head-tefillin should appear)].

**MB 1:** *Hand-tfillin - Even if he has no hand-tfillin and he has 2 head-tfillin.*

**MB 2:** *Strap - And it is obvious that this is the law also for a bag which is specially for head-tfillin, for it also is in the class of "tashmishei kedusha" [objects which serve sacred functions], like a tfillin strap [as stated in the Talmud in Megillah 26B], and thus is also proven in the commentary of the Vilna Gaon, and thus also wrote the Magen Avraham above at the end of Siman 28.*

**MB 3:** *From head-tfillin - The Magen Avraham wrote that if the strap of hand-tfillin tore off close to the knot, it is forbidden to reverse the two pieces and put the end of the lower piece on top [in a place where this piece of strap is strong] and make a hand-tfillin knot in it, and the piece where the knot WAS, to tie now to the other piece at its lower end, as he reduces its sanctity, since it had the knot and the letter YUD [this letter is created by the special knot], and now he will use it for coils around his fingers. Rather, this piece needs "gniza" [storage in a place reserved for old or worn-out holy items], and if the [remaining] strap is not long enough, then he should not make the normal number of coils around his hand. Similarly for the head-tfillin, if the part which encircles the head tears, it is forbidden to move what was within the length from the Tfillin to the knot until it is outside the knot, for the above reason. However, if the head-tfillin strap tore AFTER the knot, and he wishes to pull the strap and bring some more leather outside the knot in order that the strap have the necessary length as explained above in Siman 33, some say that he may pull the strap out even though he reduces its sanctity a little (for the place where the knot was will now hang below), for this is not really lowering its holiness - because in any case, the knot is still in the same piece of strap. And some say that too is not proper because it*

*nonetheless is a slight lowering of sanctity. And according to their words, the law for hand-tfillin is the same if the hand-tfillin strap tears close to the knot - even if he will not wish to tie the piece which tore off at the bottom, nevertheless he should not reverse the lower part of the strap to be at the top, and make the knot in it, because by doing so he slightly lowers the sanctity of the upper part of the strap, as it was previously close to the knot. Therefore, one should be stringent not to reverse the strap except under pressing circumstances - when one has no other strap, and the place where it broke off is soft and weak, not suitable for doing the binding to the arm there, as it is liable to break off - then one should reverse the strap. And see in the Biur Halacha.*

**MB 4:** *Is in the Head-Tfillin - As there is the Shin and the Dalet [Shin on the head-tfillin itself, Dalet in the knot of the head-tfillin strap], which is not so in the Hand-Tfillin, which has only the knot of the letter YUD.*

**MB 5:** *Permitted - I.e., that he should make for it four batim [compartments] and place each parasha [Torah portion] in its bayit [compartment], and similarly it is permitted to take the parashayiot and the strap of hand- tfillin for head-tfillin.*

**MB 6:** *Never put them on - On his head. Even though he designated them and prepared them for the head, the act of designation has no halachic significance.*

**MB 7:** *Like a single bayit [compartment] - And even though they are written on 4 different parchments and placed within 4 different compartments inside, this is not a problem if it has already been done, as written in Siman 32 Para. 47, see there, and see in the Biur Halacha.*

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My wife (who discovered the U.S. News article in the first place) has now discovered that Shannon Brownlee - author of the defamatory piece - is listed as none less than a Senior Editor. Please allow me to urge you again to write to 71154.1006@compuserve.com and express your feelings, if you know anything about the excellent work of Dor Yeshorim.

Somehow I couldn't help but reflect upon the relationship between the quality of the research in the article, and the location discussed in today's Halacha...