



Forgot to Remove *Tefillin* Before *Musaf* of Rosh Chodesh

לעילוי נשמת
 יואל אפרים בן אברהם עוזיאל זלצמן ז"ל

Question: *Davening Shacharit* at home on Rosh Chodesh, I realized during the first *beracha* of *Musaf* that I forgot to remove my *tefillin* and took them off before the next *beracha*. Was that correct?

Answer: We have to investigate two independent topics, and then be practical about preferences in navigating the “conflict.”

Removing *tefillin* before *Musaf*: The idea of taking off *tefillin* before *Musaf* appears in the Beit Yosef (Orach Chayim 25) as a *minhag*. He does not cite a source, and in looking for a reason, proposes that since *Kedusha* of *Musaf* is introduced (for Sephardim and Nusach Sephard) with a reference to Hashem’s *keter* (crown), it is inappropriate that we should be wearing our “crown” – *tefillin*. He cites *Chol Hamo’ed*’s lack of *tefillin* as a similar idea. The Rama (ad loc.) says that it although it follows that in places that do not recite “*Keter* ...” in *Kedusha*, one should leave his *tefillin* on, the

minhag is still to take them off. The same should apply to one who is *davening* without a *minyan* and thus *Kedusha*. The Taz (ad loc. 16) does not find the *minhag* compelling because *Musaf* should not elevate more than *Chol Hamo’ed*, and still many have the *minhag* to don *tefillin* then. The Levush (ad loc. 13) says that it is because *Musaf*, which mentions the day’s special *korbanot*, gives it an aura of *Yom Tov*. (I will add a supplementary point. Since we are careful to have *tefillin* on only for *Kri’at Shema*, *Shemoneh Esrei* (=SE), three *Kedushot* and four *Kaddeishim* (see Rama ibid.), by *Musaf*, there is little need to keep them on (see Mishna Berura 25:55).). Most *poskim* treat removing *tefillin* before *Musaf* as a not very important *minhag* (ibid. 61), despite strong Kabbalistic sources (see Kaf Hachayim, OC 25:94) that elevate its importance.

***Hefsek* (interruption) in *tefilla*:** While *hefsek* in SE is severe (Berachot 33a), there are different levels of *hefsek*. The most severe is to speak, whereas walking to a different place is more lenient and permitted for significant but modest need (Mishna Berura 104:10). While performing actions can be even more lenient, it depends how involved the action is. It seems clear that certain actions are too trivial to require special permission (e.g., wiping off some sweat). The Shulchan

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Aruch (OC 97:4) allows adjusting one's *talit* but not returning it if it fell (unless the situation harms his concentration – Mishna Berura, ad loc. 16; see also Mishna Berura 96:7 regarding picking up a *siddur* that fell to the floor). Taking off *tefillin* thus seems to require real need.

There is a *machloket* among *poskim* if one can do actions to enhance *tefilla* that if not done, will not cause a critical lacking in it (see Ishei Yisrael 32:21 regarding going to get a *siddur* to help with *Al Hanisim*; *SE* is valid without it). One could then say that if *tefillin* on during *Musaf* has some sort of negative impact on *SE*, then it should be appropriate to remove them within it, to fix the rest of *SE*. If it is just a mild preference to take them off and especially if the issue relates more to the *tefillin* than to the *tefilla*, then it is no worse than the *siddur* on the floor, and one should remove it only after *SE*. While one can bring arguments one way or the other, the Mishna Berura (25:61) states clearly that since removing the *tefillin* is just a *minhag*, one who forgot does not remove them during *SE*.

After the fact, do not be too concerned that you removed them. Simple, well-intentioned *hefsek* does not disqualify *SE* (Shulchan Aruch, OC 104:6; see Mishna Berura ad loc. 25). Furthermore, it is possible that in your lack of certainty, you were considered one whose concentration is affected (see Mishna Berura 96:7, Ishei Yisrael 32:5; see Piskei Teshuvot 25:28 regarding this case). A compromise semi-removal, which some

Acharonim advocate in borderline cases (see Kaf Hachayim, OC 25:99) would have been even easier to justify. One can move the *tefillin shel rosh* out of a position of *mitzva* relevance and slip a sleeve or cloth under the *shelyad* to make a *chatzitza*. This is likely not a *hefsek* (see above). ■

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