



YOU DON'T HAVE TO PUT ON TEFILLIN!

by David Rothstein

When I used to teach the boys - prior to their Bar Mitzvahs - how to put on Tefillin, I would start out by telling them, "You don't have to put on Tefillin." "The only thing is," I would say, "that after 120 years, when Hashem asks you why you didn't get up 20 or 30 minutes earlier each morning (except *Shabbas* and *Yom Tov*) to say your prayers and put on your Tefillin, you will have no problem -- as long as you have a good answer ready."

In shul, we would all be wise to consider a similar question. It is common to talk during *Kaddish*. However, what will we answer when - in the world of truth - *Hashem* asks us what was more important than answering with *Y'hay Shmay Rabbah M'Vorach*? What was it that was so important it couldn't wait another 30 seconds?

A related problem is that it is also common for many of us to be too busy to answer 'Amen' when we hear a blessing. When we say 'Amen', we are indicating that we agree with the blessing. Hence, when we do not answer 'Amen', does it not logically follow that we are indicating that we do not agree? How will we answer Hashem when he asks why we were too busy to take an extra moment and answer 'Amen'.

Now as we approach Rosh Hashana, it is a "puzzlement" - to quote The King & I - that we go to shul to say Selichos to show *Hashem* that we want to do better in the coming year. Yet, at the final *Kaddish* at the end of Selichos, what do we do - we talk! Indeed - it is a puzzlement!



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