ומנהג הספרדים ועדות המזרח שמקום יציאת הרצועה הכפולה מן המעברתא, יהיה בצד השני של בית התפילין, ולא בצד קשר היו"ד של התפילין, באופן שכאשר מהדק התפילין על ידו, יהיה ההידוק **לצד חוץ.** (תמונה י"ג) [וכמ"ש בב"י בשם המהר"י ן' חביב בב"י. וראה בביאור הלכה ד"ה המנהג, ובהלכה ברורה עמ' צד]

יד. יש ליזהר שלא תזוז יו"ד של הקשר מהתפלה. [ש"ע שם]. **ובזוהר** (פנחס רלו ע"ב) מחמיר מאוד בענין זה, וכתב "דלא יעדי כלל מגו תפלה דיד דלא יעביד פירודא. ומאן דרחיק ליה, ירחקון ליה מעידונא דלעילא". ומשמע מלשון זה, שאפילו אם התפלה של יד מונחת בכיס לא יזוז קשר היו"ד מהתפלה.

[כה"ח ס"ק יב. וכ"ה בבא"ח ויראו הט"ו, ומשנ"ב ס"ק י]

על כן נהגו העולם, שמשעת עשיית התפילין אחר שמכניסין הרצועה בהמעברתא קושרין היו"ד עם התפלה בחוט של גיד כדי שלא תזוז לעולם. ואפילו כשהיא מונחת בתוך הכיס. והקשירה תהיה עם הגיד שתפור בו הבית, ותהיה מצד התפר שלמעלה כדי שלא יהיה שום חציצה בין תפילין לבשרו. (תמונה י"ד) [כה"ח שם. וראה בבא"ח ובמשנ"ב שם. אור לציון ח"ב עמ' רפ-רפא]

The custom of Sefardic Jews is to run the loop that extends from the knot back and forth through the *ma'abarta*. The end of the loop, therefore, is on the side of the *bayit* opposite the knot. (Illustration № 13)

Day 51

Knot must touch the *bayit*

14) The *yod*-knot must always touch the *ketzitza* of the *tefillin shel yad*. One must take great care to prevent the *yod*-knot from moving away from it.[135] The *Zohar* is very stringent about this, declaring that if the knot is separated from the *ketzitza*, its owner will be separated from Heaven's delights and pleasures. The wording of the *Zohar* suggests that the knot must be adjacent to the *ketzitza* all the time, even when the tefillin have been put away in the *kuracha*.[136]

Using a tendon thread

Based on this halakha, the custom became widespread to position the knot pressed against the *ketzitza* and to tie a tendon-thread around the knot to hold it in place at all times, whether one is wearing it or if it is in its *kuracha*. The tendon thread ideally should be an extension of the same thread used to sew the *bayit* shut. When using a separate thread, care must be taken that it not run underneath the *bayit*, for then it would be a *hatzitza* between the *bayit* and the person's arm. (Illustration № 14)

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135. The *Zohar* (*parashat Pinehas*, page 276b) explains at length the importance of keeping the knot adjacent to the *ketzitza*, and concludes the discussion with a warning that if someone allows the knot to come away and separate from the *bayit*, he will be distanced from Heaven's pleasures. It adds that the verse (*Shemu'el I* 2:30), "כִּי מְכַבְּדַי אֲכַבֵּד וּבוֹזַי יֵקָלוּ," applies to this person. Based on this, the *Shulhan Arukh* ruled (27:2) that one must take care to ensure that the knot does not move away from the *ketzitza*.

136. The *Or Letziyon* (Vol. II, footnote on page 281) stated that although the *Sha'are Teshuva* cited the kabbalistic view that the knot must be lying against the *bayit* even when the tefillin are put away in the *kuracha*, in reality this is necessary only at the time the person recites the blessing to fulfill the mitzvah. This is an interesting exception, since the *Or Letziyon* almost always resolutely followed the rulings of the *Ben Ish Hai*.

וכהיום יודעים בעלי מלאכה מומחים, לסדר הקשר של יו"ד באומנות באופן שתהיה צמודה היטב לבית, מבלי שום אמצעים אחרים. (תמונה ס"ו) [ראה פסקי תשובות אות ו]

Nowadays, [especially since the innovation of *battim* made of thick cowskin] an expert can form the knot and affix it to the *bayit* in such a way that the knot automatically lies adjacent to the *ketzitza* at all times, precluding any need to tie it down with a thread.[137] (Illustration № 15)

137. Fastening the *yod*-knot with a tendon thread

The *Mishna Berura* (27:10) mentions that some people have the custom of fastening the *yod*-knot of the *tefillin shel yad* to the *ketzitza* using a tendon thread. He complained that this custom should be abolished since the thread, which runs underneath the *bayit*, constitutes a *hatzitza* between the *bayit* and the person's arm. The *Ben Ish Hai* (*parashat Vayera* halakha 15), however, praised the custom of tying the knot to the *bayit* with a tendon thread.

The *Kaf Hahayim* Sofer (27:12) suggested using the same thread that is stitched through the *titura* to hold the *bayit* shut, and to wind the thread from above the *titura* around the knot and back into the top of the *titura* so that the thread will not pose the threat of being a *hatzitza*. It is likely that the *Ben Ish Hai* also referred to tying it in this manner. Indeed, Harav Shelomo Zalman Auerbach followed this method for his own tefillin and for those of his sons, as stated in *Halikhot Shelomo* (*Tefilla* page 55). He added that this does not pose a problem of adding an extra item to the tefillin. On the other hand, the author of *Hazon Ish*, cited in *Dinim Vehanhagot mehaHazon Ish* (3:7) expressed his doubts about the correctness of this custom. Be that as it may, it is quite common today for people to follow the instructions of the *Ben Ish Hai* and *Kaf Hahayim*. (Illustration № 14)

Inserting a piece of leather into the *ma'abarta*

The *Dinim Vehanhagot* (ibid.) testifies that the author of *Hazon Ish* had another method to keep the knot in place. He stuffed a small piece cut from a tefillin strap inside the *ma'abarta* after forming the *yod*-knot. Since there is very limited space inside the *ma'abarta*, it became very difficult to move the tefillin strap from its place inside the *ma'abarta*. In this way, the *yod*-knot would never be pulled away from the *bayit* with normal usage. The *Zikhron Eliyahu*, cited in the *Piske Teshuvot* (27:6; footnote 32), remarked that although this method is not mentioned by any of the earlier *Poskim*, it is superior to the method of tying the knot onto the *bayit* with a tendon thread since it is invisible from the outside.

Gluing the knot onto the *ketzitza*

The *Zikhron Eliyahu*, cited in the *Piske Teshuvot* (ibid.), ruled that it is absolutely forbidden to glue the knot to the *ketzitza* even if the glue is transparent, for the strap and the *bayit* must be two distinct components of the tefillin. Furthermore, the glue might constitute a *hatzitza* between the knot and the *bayit*, so that this is not a solution whatsoever. (Illustration № 17)

Shaping the *ma'abarta* to hold the knot in place

The *Tefilla leMoshe* (17:54, cited in the *Piske Teshuvot* footnote 33) suggested yet another method, which is rarely used: When cutting the wedge in the *ma'abarta* to form the square *titura* and make space for the *yod*-knot to fit inside, the technician can make the opening narrower than the space inside the wedge. In this way, when the knot is formed and pushed into place, it cannot be pulled out unless it is raised from its place inside the wedge.

The contemporary practice

Nowadays, an experienced *sofer* can tie the *yod*-knot in such a manner that, once it is fastened to the *bayit*, it will not move from its place unless it is forced out. (Illustration № 15) This is mentioned in the *Eshel Avraham* of Butchatch in the beginning of *Siman* 27. In Baghdad during the era of the author of *Ben Ish Hai*, tefillin *battim* were all made of thin leather, or even parchment folded up like origami paper. The straps were also made of thinner animal skins. Therefore, the space in the *ma'abarta* was too wide for the knot to become stuck firmly in its place and it was likely to pull away from the *bayit* as soon as the person tightened the strap on his arm. That is why the *Poskim* recommended tying the knot to the *ketzitza* using a tendon thread. Nowadays, since our *battim* are made from the thick skins of cows and bulls, and our tefillin straps are thicker and more durable, it has become commonplace for the knot to be set into place without any extra device. It will not be pulled away from the *ketzitza* with normal use.

[Generally, the above assertion is true for Sefardic Jews and for Ashkenazic Jews who use the Sefardic method of inserting the loop of the strap through the *ma'abarta*. For Ashkenazic Jews who insert the strap only once through the *ma'abarta* and hang the knot's loop outside the *bayit*, this is more of an issue, since the space inside the *ma'abarta* is not filled to capacity in a way that prevents the strap's movements. Also, when the person tightens the strap

טו. נכון שיהיה הקשר יו"ד סמוך ממש לבית התפילין שבו נמצאות הפרשיות, ואין די בכך שיהיה הקשר צמוד למעברתא. ולכן צריך לחתוך בתיתורא מלמעלה, ויהדק היו"ד עם הבית, וכן המנהג כיום. (תמונה ס"ז) [ראה משנ"ב ס"ק יא בשם השלחן שלמה ס"ג. וביבי"א ח"ה סי' ה סוף אות ח בשם התשורת ש]

וכן יהיה צמוד הקשר לבית בצד התפילין שלצד הלב, ולא באחורי התפילין לצד המעברתא (בצד הכתף). (תמונה ר"ח) [פסקי תשובות סוף אות ו בשם שו"ת וישב הים]

טז. דעת הבן איש חי (וירא הט"ו) שאף שקשר היו"ד צמוד לבית, עם כל זה אחר שיהדק התפילין היטב לזרועו יקשור היו"ד ברצועה עם התפילין, שיש סוד בדבר לקשור היו"ד ברצועה. (תמונה ר"ט)

Shape the *titura* to accommodate the knot

15) It is not sufficient for the knot to be touching the *ma'abarta* [or *titura*]. The knot should be positioned so that it presses against the *ketzitza* containing the tefillin scroll. Therefore, it is important that the wedge that is cut into the *ma'abarta* be large enough for the knot to fit inside it, allowing the *yod* part to reach the *ketzitza* itself.[138] (Illustration №16) [The knot should be resting on the side of the *ketzitza* that lies on the chest when the tefillin are worn, and not on the back of the *ketzitza* facing the *ma'abarta*.] (Illustration № 18)

Day 52

Winding the strap around the knot

16) The *Ben Ish Hai* claimed that according to the Kabbalah, even if the *yod*-knot is resting firmly against the *ketzitza* it is important to wind the tefillin strap around the knot and the *ketzitza* after tightening the strap around one's

around the arm, he automatically pulls the knot away from the *bayit*.]

138. The responsa *Teshurat Shai* (Vol. II, #93) states that the *yod*-knot must rest directly against the *ketzitza*. The *Avne Nezer* (*O.H.* #14), however, stated that the common custom had been to rest the *yod*-knot against the *titura*, but that more recently the idea was introduced to cut a deep wedge into the *ma'abarta* so that the knot sits on the *titura* and presses against the *ketzitza*. Some rabbis cited proof for the more stringent position from Harav Zalman's *Shulhan Arukh Harav*, but the *Avne Nezer* refuted this proof.

Furthermore, the *Avne Nezer* argued that the knot must be in direct contact with the person's arm, and if it is tucked into a wedge in the *ma'abarta* on top of the lower *titura*, the *titura* will be a *hatzitza* between the knot and the arm. He concluded, therefore, that we must revert to the original custom.

Maran the Rishon Letziyon (responsa *Yabia Omer* Vol. V, #5:8) cited this debate, and added that the *Teshurat Shai* demonstrated that according to the Kabbalah the knot must be resting on the *ketzitza* and it is not sufficient for it to be resting on the *titura*. Maran the Rishon Letziyon contended that even if it is true that the knot is supposed to be in contact with the person's arm, the *titura* does not constitute a *hatzitza*. The common custom today follows the instructions of the *Teshurat Shai*.

The *Mishna Berura* (27:11) states that a wedge should be cut into the *ma'abarta* next to the upper *titura* so the knot can be inserted where it will rest against the *bayit*. Most likely, this means that it should rest against the *ketzitza*. The *Shulhan Shelomo* (27:3) likewise stated clearly that the knot must rest against the *ketzitza*, which is the *bayit*.

If the *yod*-knot is not touching the *ketzitza*

The *Piske Teshuvot* (27:6) ruled that if someone noticed when taking off his tefillin that his *yod*-knot is no longer touching the *ketzitza*, it is not necessary to put the tefillin on again after repairing it. He can rely on those who ruled that one can fulfill the mitzvah as long as the knot is touching the *titura*. Furthermore, the *Teshurat Shai* ruled that as long as the knot is very close to the *ketzitza* it is kosher even if it was not actually touching it.

Despite this lenient ruling, it takes no more than two minutes to put the *tefillin shel yad* on again and take it off, and so this is the better course of action. After all, according to the *Eshel Avraham* of Butchatch, the *yod*-knot must actually touch the *ketzitza*.