ריבוע הבתים

קלג. תפלין בין של ראש בין של יד, הלכה למשה מסיני, שיהיו מרובעות. וצריך לרבע מקום מושבן וגם הבתים (תמונה מ״א). [ראה ש״ע סי׳ לב סל״ט]. והתיתורא צריכה להיות מרובעת בין מלמעלה (תמונה מ״ב), ובין מלמטה (תמונה מ״ג) (ויתבאר לקמן הלכה קס״ז). [משנ״ב ס״ק קעז, ושעה״צ ס״ק קפא]. וכן התפירות צריכות להיות במרובע [ש״ע שם], בין למעלה (תמונה מ״ד) ובין למטה (תמונה מ״ה). [משנ״ב ס״ק קעד ושעה״צ שם]. וראה לקמן הלכה קמ״ג. ויש להזהיר את הרבים, שישגיחו שיהיו התפילין מרובעין לא רק בראש הבתים, אלא גם התיתורא והתפירות צריכות להיות מרובעות מעיקר הדין. [ראה משנ״ב ס״ק קעז]

קלד. ריבוע התפילין יהיה באופן שאורכו ורוחבו שווים, וגם כל זויותיו זויות ישרות (של תשעים מעלות) (תמונה מ״ו). [ראה ש״ע סעיף לט, ובאוליי״צ ח״א סי׳ ד ד״ה ולפי]. וריבוע הבתים צריך להיות בכל משך גובהן (תמונה מ״ז). [משנ״ב ס״ק קעח]

וגובה הבתים אין להקפיד אם הוא יותר מרוחבן ואורכן [רמ״א סעיף לט], דריבוע לא נאמר אלא על האורך והרוחב. [ביאור הלכה שם]. ומצוה מן המובחר שגם גובה הבתים יהיה כאורכן וכרוחבן (תמונה מ״ח). [דרכי משה אות טו, ובקול יעקב ס״ק קעז בשם האשכול, ובפסקי תשובות סוף אות סו שכ״מ מסתימת הרמב״ם וכתבי האר״י]. וראה לעיל בסימן כ״ז הלכה ד׳ בהערה.

Square *Battim*

Three concentric squares

133) Based on *halakha leMoshe miSinai*, both the *tefillin shel yad* and *tefillin shel rosh* must be square. The compartment that houses the scrolls (the *ketzitza*) must be square, and the base on which it sits (the *titura*) must be square as well. (Illustration №41) Both the top part of the *titura* (Illustration №42) and the bottom plate of the *titura* (Illustration №43) must be square, as explained below in halakha 167. Furthermore, the stitches with which the *bayit* is sewn closed must form perfect squares, both on top of the *titura* (Illustration №44) and on its bottom. (Illustration №45) See below in halakha 143.

It is important for people to be aware that not only the *ketzitza*, but also the *titura* and the stitches must form perfect squares.

Definition of "square"

134) The definition of "square" regarding *battim* is that all four sides are of equal length and that each corner forms a 90 degree angle. (Illustration №46) The *ketzitza* must have square measurements all along its height, from the base of the *titura* to the top. (Illustration №47)

The *ketzitza* does not have to be a cube. That is, the height of the *ketzitza* does not have to match its length or width. Nevertheless, the height should ideally match the length and width. (Illustration №48) See above in the footnote to 27:4.

קלה. ריבוע התפילין מעיקר הדין הוא שיהיה מרובע למראית העין. [ראה יביע"א ח"ט סי' ו אות ד-ה, ובאור לציון ח"ב עמ' רפג]. והטוב ביותר שירבע הבתים על ידי כלי מדידה, בתכלית הדיוק, וכפי שעושים בזמנינו כמה בעלי מלאכה תפילין מרובעים בדיוק רב (תמונה מ"ט). [ראה בהלכה ברורה עמ' תכ-תכא]

קלו. עשאם לתפילין מרובעות, ואחר זמן נתקלקל ריבוען (שנתעקמו הבתים (תמונה נ'), או שנעשו חודי הבתים עגול (תמונה נ"א), או שנתקלקל ריבוע התיתורא (תמונה נ"ב) או התפירה), צריך לרבען. [ש"ע שם, ובמשנ"ב ס"ק קעט]. וכל זמן שלא

How exact must the square be?

135) It is sufficient for the tefillin to appear exactly square to a casual observer, even if it would be found to be not exactly square if it is measured with an instrument. Ideally, the *bayit* should be manufactured to be perfectly square, and this is the common custom of all *battim* manufacturers in our times.[114] (Illustration № 49)

If the shaped becomes warped with time

136) If the *battim* were perfectly square when they were first manufactured, but later on they became warped (Illustration № 50) or the corners became rounded, (Illustration № 51), or if such damage occurred to the *titura*, (Illustration № 52) they must be restored to their original condition.[115] As long as they have not been repaired, the

114. The *Mishna Berura* (32:176) commented that it is next to impossible to manufacture *battim* that are absolutely square, but still one is expected to make them as close to perfectly square as one can. The responsa *Igrot Moshe* (Vol. III, *Y.D.* #120) ruled that it is not necessary to measure the *battim* with a calibrated ruler. It is sufficient for the *battim* to appear to be perfectly square to the casual observer. This is likewise the ruling of the author of *Hazon Ish*, cited in *Orhot Rabbenu* (Vol. I, page 32).

The *Shulhan Arukh* (32:39) cites our Sages' teaching that the diagonal line from one corner to the opposite corner of a square is 1.4 times as long as a side of the square. For example, if the sides of a square are 5 inches long, the diagonal line from corner to corner should be 7 inches long. This is only an approximation, however. According to the Pythagorean theorem, the diagonal line is equal to the square root of 50, or 7.071. If someone would measure the diagonal lines of a supposed square and find that they are exactly 7 inches long, this would mean that in reality it is not exactly a square, but that the horizontal sides are a bit longer or shorter than the vertical sides. See the comment of Tosafot to *Sukkah* 8a).

Many *Aharonim* deduced from this that although the halakha states that the *battim* must be square, this does not mean that they must be perfectly square. As long as the diagonal line from one corner to the opposite corner is between 1.4 and 1.414 times the length of the square's side, it is considered square according to halakha. This is the ruling of the responsa *Igrot Moshe* (Vol. II, *Y.D.* #4), *Yabia Omer* (Vol. IX, #6:5), Harav Shelomo Zalman Auerbach (*Halikhot Shelomo Tefilla*, page 53). Therefore, as long as the *bayit* appears to be square it is kosher. The *Or Letziyon* (Vol. I, #4) defined the leniency more precisely, citing another Torah scholar saying that the discrepancy in the measurement can be up to one fiftieth of the diagonal line in a perfect square. In responsa *Teshuvot Vehanhagot* (Vol. I, #40) this scholar is identified as Harav David Baharan of Yerushalayim. The *Or Letziyon* rejected this definition, however, and ruled that if the *bayit* does not appear to be square it is not kosher even if the discrepancy is less than one fiftieth. If the *bayit* appears to be square to the observer, however, it is kosher even if it would not be found square if it was measured with a ruler. This ruling is repeated in *Or Letziyon* (Vol. II, page 283).

The *Halakha Berura* (page 421) cited several *Poskim* ruling that one must measure the *battim* with a ruler to ascertain that they are as square as possible. The *Piske Teshuvot* (*Siman* 32, footnote 432) testified that Harav Yitzhak Ze'ev Soloveichik demanded that tefillin be measured with a ruler to ascertain that they are perfectly square. This is the common custom, but the halakha requires only that the *battim* appear to be square to the casual observer. The responsa *Shevet Halevi* (Vol. III, #2:2); Vol. X, #156:2) ruled that any discrepancy of less than a millimeter is definitely acceptable.

115. This is the ruling of Rabbenu Meir of Rothenberg, cited by the *Bet Yosef*. Regarding tzitzit, the halakha is that if the corner of the tallit was intact when the tzitzit strands were tied to it, then even if many of the

ניתקן הריבוע כדינו, התפילין פסולים. [קול יעקב ס״ק קפ]. ואם נתקלקל הריבוע בכל שהוא באופן שאינו ניכר למראית העין, יש להקל. וכמבואר בהלכה הקודמת.

ולכן התפלין המובאים מערי בבל, שהבתים שלהם נראים לעין שאינם מרובעים, מבלי להזדקק לכלי מדידה, אין לברך עליהן, דהוי ברכה לבטלה, כיון שדעת רוב הפוסקים שגם הבתים של התפלין הלכה למשה מסיני היא שצריך שיהיו מרובעים. [יבי״א ח״ט סי׳ ו אות ח]

קלז. חודי זויות התפילין שנשחקו ונשתפשפו מעט (מחמת השפשוף בשרוול הבגד וכיו״ב), וניכר עדיין הריבוע (תמונה נ״ג), כשרים הבתים. ומכל מקום לכתחלה יש לרבעם כראוי.

אולם אם הריבוע שלהם נשתפשף מאוד ונעשה כעיגול באופן שאין ריבועו ניכר (תמונה נ״ד), אסור לברך עליהם. [ראה עוי״ח חיי שרה ה״ח, יבי״א ח״ט סי׳ ו אות ז, אוליצ חי״א סוי״ס ד, ובחי״ב עמ׳ רפד, ילקוי״י עמ׳ תקסב, הלכה ברורה עמ׳ תכב]

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battim are not kosher. If the discrepancy is not visible to the casual observer, the *battim* are kosher, as explained in the previous halakha.

Many of the tefillin imported from Iraq [when there was a thriving Jewish community in many of its cities] are not square, and this is immediately noticeable to a casual observer. Since most *Poskim* ruled that the *halakha leMoshe miSinai* demands that the *ketzitza* be square, these tefillin cannot be considered kosher and no one may recite a blessing on them.

If the corners become rounded with age

137) If the corners of the *battim* become somewhat worn down, which may occur due to daily wear, the *battim* are still kosher as long as they appear to be square. (Illustration № 53) Even so, it is best to have sharp corners of the corners restored. If a corner becomes so worn that the *bayit* no longer appears to be square, (Illustration № 54) it is forbidden to recite a blessing on it.[116]

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threads become unraveled later on so that the tzitzit are no longer attached in the proper position, the tallit is still kosher. [See the *Yalkut Yosef Tzitzit English Edition*, *Siman* 11:36.] This is because our Sages derived from the verse that it remains kosher since it was positioned properly when the tzitzit strands were tied to it. The halakha demanding that tefillin be square, in contrast, applies at all times. See the *Mishna Berura* (32:181) and *Kol Yaakov* (32:178).

Relying on previous measuring

The *Mishna Berura* (32:181) and *Kol Yaakov* (32:181) ruled that it is not necessary to measure one's tefillin every day to ascertain that they are square. Once they have been measured, we may assume that they have not changed unless we see that something has happened to them.

116. The *Mishna Berura* (*Bi'ur Halakha* 32:39) ruled that even if the *bayit* is nicked and one can feel the damage when running a fingernail across it, the *bayit* is kosher. It is still considered square. The *Arukh Hashulhan* (32:77) added that if the edges of the *bayit* are no longer as sharp as they had once been, this does not detract from its status as square. All tefillin *battim* lose their sharp edges with time, he contended, and the Torah does not expect us to be superhuman. Some *battim* manufacturers are very skilled and can produce *battim* that will last for decades, but most manufacturers do not know how to make them to last very long. It is unreasonable to think that the Creator would make such demands on His people.

The *Od Yosef Hai* (*parashat Haye Sara* halakha 8) admitted that some *Poskim* ruled leniently regarding *battim* whose corners have become rounded. Nevertheless, he ruled that anyone who possesses genuine fear for Heaven will make sure to repair them whenever this happens. See more about this in responsa *Yabia Omer* (Vol. IX, #6:7) and the *Or Letziyon* (Vol. I, #4; Vol. II, page 284).