קנא. לכתחילה יהיה הצבע שחור כעורב, אך מעיקר הדין די כל שלעיני בני אדם נראה שחור, ויצבע כל חלקי התפילין והשי"ן והתיתורא והמעברתא. [פסקי תשובות אות סה]
ויש להשחיר במקום החיתוך שעושין בצדדי המעברתא להיכר הריבוע. אבל אין צריך לצבוע בחלל המעברתא (תמונה ע"ג). [פסקי תשובות הערה תסג, בשם ס' זכרון אליהו]

קנב. אם ציפה הבתים (עשויים מעור בהמה טהורה), בציפוי זהב, או בציפוי עור בהמה טמאה, פסולים. [ש"ע סעיף מח], ואפילו חתך במקום השי"ן שהשי"ן נראה. [משנ"ב ס"ק רכא]
וכל זה דוקא כשחיברם על הבתים, אבל הקופסאות שעושים לבתי התפילין, אין בזה חשש. [ערוה"ש סוף סעיף פ"ח, פסקי תשובות אות עד]. וראה לעיל בסימן כ"ז שלא לכסות התפלה של יד בכיסוי פלסטיק בשעת ברכה.

Day 38

Which shade of black?

151) The paint used to color the *battim* should be "black as a raven." Technically, any shade of black that people consider to be black is kosher. All sides of the *battim* should be painted black, including the two letters *shin*, the *titura*, and the *ma'abarta*. Care should be taken to paint the fourth side of the *titura*, meaning the places where the *ma'abarta* is cut away to form the square of the *titura*. It is not necessary to paint inside the *ma'abarta* (Illustration № 73) or the underside of the *titura*.

***Battim* overlaid with other materials**

152) If someone would overlay the *battim* with gold or with leather made of a nonkosher animal's skin, the *battim* would not be kosher, even if windows were cut on either side so that the letters *shin* would be visible.[128] This halakha applies only to coverings that are attached permanently to the *battim*, but not to caps that can be put on and taken off at any time. Above, in *Siman* 27, it was explained that one should remove any such cap when one recites the blessing on the tefillin.

possible one should avoid using tefillin with scrolls made of parchment that was painted white, but if there are no other tefillin available one may use them and recite the blessing on them.]

Nevertheless, one should avoid using *battim* blackened with a thick paste that can be peeled off in strips, since it is possible that the *Noda Bihuda* would have agreed that this is not kosher. It is more likely that the *battim* are kosher even in such a case, since it is common to find that one can peel off the white paint from parchment, and even so our tradition is to consider the parchment kosher.

The *Halakha Berura* (page 430) did not mention this gloss. In practice, nowadays, fine tefillin are readily available almost anywhere in the world and there is no reason to rely on any questionable leniency. Just as we avoid using tefillin scrolls written on *kelaf mashu'ah*, we ought to avoid using *battim* covered with thick black paste. See below in *Siman* 33 regarding the paint used on the tefillin straps.

128. The *Halikhot Shelomo Tefilla* (page 55) and the *Piske Teshuvot* (32:74) ruled that it is permissible to apply oil or varnish to the bottom of the *battim* to protect them from sweat or moisture, or to give the leather a glossy appearance. It is likewise permissible to apply a transparent synthetic substance that becomes absorbed into the leather and adds to its strength. Many people apply such a substance to the corners of the *battim*. Above in halakha 127, it was explained that it is permissible to apply gelatin made from the bones of nonkosher animals to the bottom of the *titura*.

קנג. סוד הצבע השחור, על דרך ידוע ועל דעת השכל, לדמות על יחודו יתברך יחוד אמת, כמו שאין צבע השחור מקבל צבע אחר כמו שמקבלים שאר הצבעים, כן נאמר אצל הקב"ה "אני ה' לא שניתי" (מלאכי ג, ו). [קול יעקב ס"ק קפו]

החריצים שבין הבתים של ראש

קנד. החריצים, דהיינו מהמחיצות של ארבעת הבתים של תפילין של ראש, צריך שיגיעו עד מקום התפר, דהיינו החלק העליון של התיתורא (תמונה ע"ד). ואם לא הגיעו החריצים עד מקום התפר, כשר, ובלבד שיהיה ניכר החריץ, כך שיהיו ארבעת ראשי הבתים ניכרים לכל. [ראה ש"ע סעיף מ]

וישיעור המחיצות שבין בית לבית, יהיה עד סוף מקום הפרשיות. [גר"ז סעיף סא]. ויש מקילים אף שהפרשיות יוצאות מחוץ למחיצות, אך על כל פנים נכון להזהר שיהיו הפרשיות לכל הפחות עד רוב גובה הבתים, או על כל פנים עד חצי גובה הבתים. [הלכה ברורה עמ' תלא, ונתבאר בס' זכרון אליהו דיני תפילין פ"ב]

The concept of black

153) The concept of the color black is that it represents the absolute oneness of God. Just like no color can be added to absolute darkness, no change ever takes place in God, as the verse states (*Mal'akhi* 3:6), "אֲנִי ה' לֹא שָׁנִיתִי – I am God; I have not changed."

Grooves Between the Compartments

Down to the *titura*

154) The grooves between the four compartments of the *tefillin shel rosh* must reach down to the level of the stitches on the *titura*. (Illustration №74) If they do not reach all the way down to that level, the *bayit* is still kosher as long as the grooves are visible so that anyone can tell that the *bayit* consists of four separate compartments.[129]

Fitting scrolls into the compartments

On the inside of the *tefillin shel rosh*, the the four compartments must be roomy enough to enable the four scrolls to be inserted completely, each in its own compartment. Some *Poskim* ruled that the *bayit* is kosher even if a part of the scrolls protrudes beyond the walls separating the compartments. Even according to the lenient opinion, one should make sure that the majority of the scrolls' height is separated by the walls of the compartments, or at the very least half their height.[130]

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129. The Talmud (*Menahot* 35a) teaches that Abaye ruled that the grooves must reach down to the level of the stitches, and that Rav Dimi of Neharde'a ruled that as long as the grooves are long enough for one to see that there are four separate compartments it is kosher. Rambam (*Hilkhot Tefillin* 3:11) and the *Shulhan Arukh* (32:40) cited both opinions. The *Bet Yosef* explained that Abaye teaches us what the *bayit* should look like ideally, and Rav Dimi teaches us what the minimum is for the *bayit* to be kosher.

The *Sefer Ha'itur* interpreted this passage as referring to the letters *shin* on the sides of the *tefillin shel rosh*. According to this, Abaye is telling us that the letter *shin* must start from the level of the *titura*. See below in halakha 164.

Note that there seems to be an error in the wording of the *Halakha Berura* (page 431) regarding the halakha about the grooves between the compartments.

130. According to Harav Zalman, the inside walls separating the four compartments must be at least

קנה. יקפיד מאד שיהיו החריצים עשויים היטב ומפרידים בין הבתים גופא, ובכל שלושת צדדי הבית, וגם לאחר טיחת הצבע והלא״ק. ולא יהיו רק סימני חריצים בעלמא על הצבע. כי צריך שיהיו החריצים ניכרים ממש (תמונה ע״ה). [ראה ביאור הלכה ד״ה חריץ, קול יעקב ס״ק קפט, ובפסקי תשובות אות סא]

ולכן לא טוב עושים הסופרים שטחין את כל הבית בטיח או בצבע מבריק, ואחר כך עושים איזה רושם של חריץ בצבע. וכל שכן הסופרים שתולין עור על ארבעת הבתים, ורושמין בו בסכין כדי שתהיה נראה כארבעה בתים, פסול, כי על ידי זה נעשה תפילה של יד. [משנ״ב ס״ק קפח]

Grooves carved between the compartments

155) The grooves carved into the surface of the *tefillin shel rosh* must correspond to the actual points between the compartments. The grooves must be visible along all three sides of the *bayit*, and they must remain visible even after the *bayit* has been painted black. (Illustration № 75) The *bayit* may not be covered with a thick layer of black paint so that the grooves are completely covered, even if the paint is scored to represent the grooves underneath. The separating grooves themselves must be visible. Otherwise, the *bayit* has the status of *tefillin shel yad*, and it is not kosher for use as *tefillin shel rosh*.[131]

as long as the scroll's height. According to Harav Menahem Azarya of Fano (responsa #38, cited in *Sheyare Kenesset Hagedola*, glosses on *Bet Yosef* 32:36) the tefillin are kosher even if the separating walls are short and the scrolls touch one another. The *Ture Zahav* (32:36) concurred with the lenient opinion. There are various opinions regarding the minimum height of the separating walls in such a case, as cited in *Zikhron Eliyahu* (chapter 2) and the *Halakha Berura* (page 432).

131. The *Piske Teshuvot* (32:61, footnote 422) complained that sometimes the person painting the tefillin notices that one compartment is narrower than others or that the separation forms a diagonal or curved line, although their sum total forms a perfect square. In order to make it appear that each compartment is equally wide, he covers the *bayit* completely with a thick layer of paint so that the grooves are not visible and then he forms new, equidistant grooves on top of the paint. Such tefillin are not kosher at all. The visible grooves must match the real grooves under the paint, even if they are diagonal or curved. The lack of symmetry does not make the *bayit* nonkosher, but it does detract from its beauty.

Above in halakha 139, it was explained that some *battim* manufacturers glue the four compartments together, and that the *Haye Adam* ruled that as long as the grooves on top of the *bayit* are visible and display that there are four compartments inside, it is kosher. The *Hatam Sofer* disagreed and ruled that this is not enough to make the *bayit* kosher, and therefore the glue may be used only at the bottoms of the walls of the four compartments. The *Mishna Berura* stated that the common custom was to follow the lenient opinion of the *Haye Adam*. Nowadays, the common custom is to place some glue on the bottom between each compartment, as explained above in the footnote to halakha 139. Since *battim* are placed under the tremendous pressure of the hydraulic presses, even a bit of glue spreads across the entire expanse between the compartments. For this reason, the manufacturer must cut through most of the glue afterward to separate the compartments.

Width of the grooves

The method used nowadays is to carve grooves along the separation between the four compartments. Depending on the manufacturer, these grooves range between 1 and 2 mm wide. As long as the actual separation between the compartments is within this groove, it is kosher. (Illustration № 76)