גודל הבתים

קנו. אורך ורוחב הבתים וגובהן אין לו שיעור. [ש"ע סעיף מא] ומכל מקום נכון לחוש לדעת הפוסקים שלכתחילה לא יעשה אותן קטנים מאצבעיים על אצבעיים (ארבע ס"מ, על ארבע ס"מ) עם התיתורא (תמונה ע"ז).

ויש שכתבו שאם אין מחזיק עם התיתורא רק כאצבע על אצבע (שני ס"מ, על שני ס"מ) אפילו בדיעבד פסול, ואף שיש מי שלימד עליהם זכות, מכל מקום כל בעל נפש יזהר לעשות התיתורא רחב ב' אצבעיים. ולבד כל אלו, מצוי מאוד באלו התפילין הקטנים שפרשיותיהן גרועות עד מאד, מצד דחק המקום, וגם כמעט אי אפשר שיהיה הכתב כדינו. ואפילו אם יהיה כשר לפי שעה, מכל מקום אין כתב קטן ודק כזה מתקיים לזמן מרובה. ועל כן השומר נפשו ישמר מהם. [משנ"ב ס"ק קפט, קול יעקב ס"ק קצ]

Day 39

Size of the *Battim*

Minimum size of tefillin *battim*

156) The Talmud does not specify any minimum or maximum size for tefillin *battim*, but it is best to avoid using tefillin with a *titura* smaller than 4 centimeters square. (Illustration №77) Some *Poskim* ruled that if the *battim* are smaller than 2 centimeters square they are not kosher. Although other *Poskim* defended the use of such tiny *battim*, anyone who possesses a proper measure of fear for Heaven will make sure to use *battim* that are at least 4 centimeters square. Another factor to be aware of is that the scrolls inserted in these tiny tefillin are likely to be of very poor quality, with all sorts of questionably shaped letters. Even if they are written properly, the thin lines of the letters have a much shorter life than scrolls with larger writing. For all these reasons, it is highly recommended to avoid using very tiny tefillin.[132]

132. Miniature tefillin

The Talmud does not specify any minimum size for tefillin, but several *Rishonim* (*Shimusha Rabba*, Tosafot and Rashba on *Eruvin* 95b) mentioned the size of two *etzba'ot* square. An *etzba* (fingersbreadth) is approximately 2 centimeters wide, and so two *etzba'ot* means 4 centimeters square. The *Rishonim* debated whether this measurement refers to the *ketzitza* alone or to the *titura*.

The *Bet Yosef* cited Rabbenu Asher testifying that in his time people used tefillin that were smaller than two *etzba'ot*. He explained that if the *ketzitza* would be that large (4 centimeters square), and then you add the *titura* and *ma'abarta*, the tefillin would not fit into the prescribed portion of the person's head, while the Talmud states that there is enough room on a person's head to place two *battim* of *tefillin shel rosh*. This being the case, Rabbenu Asher concluded, we assume that there are specific measurements for the width, length, or height of the *battim*. This is likewise the ruling of the *Shulhan Arukh* (32:41).

The *Bayit Hadash* ruled that the square of the *titura* must not be smaller than two *etzba'ot*, but Harav HIDA (*Birke Yosef* 32:13) cited the *Bet Yehuda* who decided that we may rely on the ruling of the *Shulhan Arukh*.

Nevertheless, it is best to avoid very small tefillin since it is much more difficult to write the scrolls correctly in tiny letters. Those who choose to wear two pairs of tefillin at the same time must have miniature *battim*, and therefore they must employ an expert, talented scribe who is capable of writing fine scrolls in miniature.

One *etzba* square

The *Olat Tamid* ruled that if the tefillin are smaller than one *etzba* square they are not kosher, but the *Eliya Rabba* and Harav Zalman ruled that they are kosher. Harav HIDA (*Tuv Ayin* 18:13) cited the Ritb"a stating that there is a minimum size to tefillin, and therefore we cannot assume that tefillin are kosher unless they are at least 1.5 *etzba'ot* (3 centimeters) square. The *Kol Yaakov* (32:190) added that anyone possessing a fair measure of fear for Heaven will

קנז. כתבו באחרונים, שהנכון ששיעור אורך ורוחב התיתורא עם המעברתא, יהיה בשיעור ממוצע, כלומר לא פחות מאצבעיים, ולא יותר מארבע אצבעות. [ביאור הלכה סוד"ה אורך ורוחב]. כלומר בין 4 ס"מ ל8- ס"מ (תמונה ע"ח). כי כשעושה התפילין מידי קטנות יש חשש מכשול בכתיבתן שתהיה הכתיבה כהלכה שלא יהיה שינוי בצורת האותיות ולא יהיו דיבוקים. וכן יש חשש בהכנסת הפרשיות שמקפלן בהידוק ומכניסן בדוחק לבתים של ראש. וגם כשעושה התפלין מידי גדולות יש חשש שלא יהיו מונחות במקומן הראוי (וכמו שכתבנו לעיל בסימן כ"ז הלכה ג). [ראה ביאוה"ל ד"ה אין, ובהלכה ברורה עמ' תלה-תלו, ובפסקי תשובות עמ' אות סו]

Recommended size

157) The *Aharonim* recommended using tefillin *battim* of average size, with the *titura* no smaller than two *etzba'ot* (4 centimeters) square and no larger than four *etzba'ot* (8 centimeters) square. (Illustration №78) If the *battim* are smaller than this, it is difficult to find well-written scrolls that will fit comfortably inside the *tefillin shel rosh*. If the tefillin are too large, it will be difficult to position them correctly on one's head and arm, as explained above in *Siman* 27:3.[133]

make sure to use tefillin whose *titura* is at least 1.5 *etzba'ot* square. He added that we have no authority to protest those who use tefillin that are smaller than this, since according to Maran there is no prescribed minimum size.

The *Mishna Berura* (*Bi'ur Halakha* 32:41) deduced from the *Poskim* that everyone must make sure not to sometimes use very tiny tefillin and at other times use tefillin that are three times the size of the first set. One set or the other must not be kosher, according to his interpretation of the Talmud.

A matching set

The *Piske Teshuvot* (*Siman* 32, footnote 468) recommended using a set of tefillin with equal-sized *battim* for *tefillin shel rosh* and for *tefillin shel yad*. He explained that the discussion among the *Poskim* about the tefillin's size applies to the *tefillin shel rosh* only, but the *tefillin shel yad* can technically be as small as one wishes. In fact, the Talmud (*Gittin* 58a) clearly describes the *tefillin shel rosh* as being larger than the *tefillin shel yad*. See the responsa of Harav Yaakov Lorberbaum of Lisa (#2).

133. The *Shulhan Shelomo*, cited in the *Bi'ur Halakha* (32:41), warned that people should not use very large tefillin since it will be difficult to position the *tefillin shel rosh* correctly on one's head, or the *tefillin shel yad* on the lower half of one's upper arm. The *Bi'ur Halakha* added that his recommendation to use tefillin whose length, including the *ma'abarta*, is between two *etzba'ot* and four *etzba'ot*, meaning between 4 and 8 centimeters long. According to the *Hazon Ish*, this would mean between 5 and 10 centimeters long, but in practice we follow the measurements defined by Harav Avraham Hayim Na'eh. See the *Piske Teshuvot* (32:66).

Wearing two sets of tefillin at the same time

Maran the Rishon Letziyon embarked on a lifelong campaign to discourage people from wearing their tefillin "of Rashi" and tefillin "of Rabbenu Tam" at the same time, based on the considerations described in this halakha. If the people use tefillin so small that they can easily fit properly on their heads and arms, then it is likely that the scrolls have not been written correctly. If they use tefillin that are slightly larger, it will be very difficult to position them correctly on their heads and arms, especially for shorter people who have shorter arms.

More recently, there are *battim* manufacturers who specialize in making miniature *battim* to enable people to wear two sets at the same time, satisfying the instructions of the Kabbalah. (Illustration №79) There are also scribes who specialize in writing miniature tefillin scrolls that are beautiful and perfectly kosher. Technically, the problems inherent in wearing two sets at one time can be solved. Still, unless one is very careful one is likely to position one set or the other in the wrong place on the head or arm.

It is well-known that when people would consult with Harav Ben Tziyon Abba Shaul about their wish to begin wearing both sets of tefillin at the same time, he would actually measure their arms and then decide whether it was proper for each person to adopt this practice. Maran the Rishon Letziyon felt that it was wrong to decide this

דיני השי"ן של תפילין

קנח. שי"ן של תפילין הלכה למשה מסיני. והיינו שיעשה בעור הבתים של תפילין ראש כמין שי"ן בולטת מקמטי העור, אחת מימינו ואחת משמאלו, של ימין המניח של שלושה ראשים, ושל שמאל המניח של ארבעה ראשים (תמונה פ'). [ש"ע סעיף מב]

וסודות גדולים ורמזים ישנם בשיני"ן אלו. ועל פי חכמת האמת יש לעשות קודם השי"ן של ארבעה ראשים, ואחר כך השי"ן של שלשה ראשים. [ראה ב"י אות מב בשם הגהת הסמ"ג]

ואין חילוק בין איטר לאדם אחר, שאף בתפילין של איטר עושה השי"ן כשאר בני אדם, בימין המניח של שלושה ראשים, ומשמאל המניח של ארבעה ראשים. [משנ"ב ס"ק קצד, קול יעקב ס"ק קצג]

Day 40

The Letter *Shin*

3-headed and 4-headed *shin*

158) According to *halakha leMoshe miSinai*, the letter *shin* must be formed on the right side and left side of the *bayit* of *tefillin shel rosh*. On one side the *shin* has three heads, like a regular letter *shin*, but on the other side it has four heads. The custom is to form the three-headed *shin* on the right side [of the person wearing it] and the four-headed *shin* on the left side, (Illustration № 80) whether the tefillin are worn by a right-handed or left-handed person.[134] According to the Kabbalah, these letters have enormous significance, and the manufacturer should form the four-headed *shin* before the three-headed one.[135]

question on an individual basis, and therefore he instructed everyone to wear each set one at a time.

134. The *Bet Yosef*, citing a gloss to *Sefer Mitzvot Gadol*, explained that the four-headed *shin* represents the writing on the two Tablets received at Mount Sinai. God wrote the Ten Commandments by engraving the words into the stone tablets. The letter *shin*, therefore, consisted of three grooves hewn into the stone. The three grooves, of course, were surrounded by four stone edges, and these four stone edges are represented by the four-headed *shin* on the *tefillin shel rosh*.

Based on this, the *Eliya Rabba* (32:66) explained why the custom is to form the four-headed *shin* on the left side. God always faces the person addressing Him, and so the person's left side is on the right from God's perspective. God's right side represents the Torah, as the verse states (*Devarim* 33:3): "מִימִינוֹ אֵשׁ דָּת לָמוֹ – From His right Hand [He delivered] the fiery Law to them." Therefore, the letter *shin* appearing on God's right side is formed with four heads to represent God's writing on the Tablets.

This is alluded to by the Talmud's statement: "The *shin* of tefillin is a halakha as Moshe received it from Sinai." The Talmud seems to refer to only one letter *shin*, not both of them. It refers specifically to the four-headed *shin*, which is the one that Moshe Rabbenu received on the Tablets from Mount Sinai. For this reason, the *Eliya Rabba* concluded, even a left-handed person uses tefillin with a four-headed *shin* on his left side. The important thing is for the four-headed *shin* to be on God's right side, and it makes no difference whether the person is right-handed or left-handed.

135. God wrote the Ten Commandments on the two Tablets before Moshe Rabbenu wrote the first Torah scroll. Therefore, the *Bet Yosef* added, we form the four-headed *shin* representing God's writing before forming the three-headed *shin* that represents Moshe Rabbenu's writing. For some reason, the *Mishna Berura* and *Kol Yaakov* made no mention of forming one type of *shin* before the other.

The *Bet Yosef* offers two alternative reasons for the appearance of the letter *shin* on the *tefillin shel rosh*. First, the *Orhot Hayim* (#27) explained that the letter *shin* (which has the numerical value of 300) represents the 300 days of the year when there is a mitzvah to wear tefillin. The *Eliya Rabba* explained how we arrive at this figure.

Rabbenu Yosef Askandarani pointed out that the "opposing" letters (*At-bash*) to those of God's Name (*yod*, *he*, *vav*, *he*) are *mem*, *tzadik*, *pe*, *tzadik*, and the numerical