דיני תפירת הבתים

קצג. הלכה למשה מסיני שיהיו תפילין נתפרים בגידי בהמה וחיה טהורים [ש"ע סעיף מט], ואפילו מנבילות וטריפות שלהן. [רמב"ם פ"ג מתפילין ה"ט, ובמשנ"ב ס"ק רכג. וטוב לתפור בגידי שור (תמונה ק"ג) [ש"ע שם], וכן מנהגינו [קול יעקב ס"ק רכו], והטעם כיון שמין עגל הוא, לכפר על מעשה עגל. [עטרת צבי ס"ק צז, וכ"ה ביראים סי' שצט]

Sewing the *Battim* Closed

Thread of spun tendon fibers

193) According to *halakha leMoshe miSinai*, tefillin *battim* must be sewn shut with thread made of the fibers of tendons from kosher mammals. It does not matter, however, whether or not the animal was slaughtered kosher or if it was killed in some other manner, and the tendons of an animal that was found to be *terefa* may likewise be used.[165] It is best to make the thread from the tendons of a bull, (Illustration

165. The *Shulhan Arukh*, based on the *Rishonim*, ruled that the tendons of a kosher animal must be used. The *Levush* (32:49) ruled that if someone sewed together tefillin using threads made of the tendons of nonkosher animals, or using linen thread, the tefillin are not kosher.

***Gid Hanashe* thread**

The *Mishna Berura* (32:224) stated that it is uncertain whether tefillin would be kosher if they were sewn using thread made from *gid hanashe* taken from a kosher animal. It could be that all that matters is that the thread comes from the tendons of a kosher species of animal, even if the threads themselves are not kosher, just like the tendons of an animal that was not slaughtered kosher. On the other hand, it could be that *gid hanashe* is worse since it is not kosher from the moment the animal is born. The truth is that the *gid hanashe* of an unborn fetus is kosher if its mother is slaughtered, and so it can be considered something that had the potential at one time to be kosher.

Harav Moshe ben Habib ruled that thread made of *gid hanashe* is kosher, but he recommended that it be avoided, especially since it appears that the *Zohar* does not permit it. The *Ginat Veradim*, however, rejected this ruling, claiming that it is definitely not kosher for tefillin thread. See the *Halakha Berura* (page 461).

Threads made of parchment

The *Shulhan Arukh* (32:50) states that if there are no tendon threads available, one may sew up the tefillin with thread made of parchment, but he must replace the stitches as soon as tendon threads can be obtained. In other words, since both tendons and skin are the animal's flesh, it is possible to make threads from the animal's skin for sewing tefillin or Torah scrolls.

The *Noda Bihuda* disagreed, and ruled that parchment thread may not be used even if nothing else is available. Therefore, if someone must resort to using parchment threads, it is better to use them rather than not wear tefillin at all, but he should not recite the blessing. This is the ruling of the *Mishna Berura* (32:227), the *Kol Yaakov* (32:228), and the *Halakha Berura* (page 462).

Fowl tendons

The *Noda Bihuda* (Vol. II, #2), cited in the *Mishna Berura* (32:227), ruled that one must not use thread made of a fowl's tendons since we cannot determine which of them are actually considered tendons and which are only fibers or nerves. This is likewise the ruling of the *Kol Yaakov* (32:223). The *Arukh Hashulhan* added (32:89) that even if fowl tendons would be kosher, they are too fragile to be practical for this purpose.

Thread made of intestinal fiber

The *Halakhot Ketanot* ruled that one may produce tefillin thread from an animal's intestinal fibers, but the *Noda Bihuda* rejected this ruling. The *Mishna Berura* and *Kol Yaakov* concurred with this, explaining that although these threads are practical and have tensile strength, the *halakha leMoshe miSinai* requires tendons.

Purchasing tendons from non-Jews

The *Shulhan Arukh* (32:50) ruled that one may not make thread out of tendons purchased from non-Jews, since we must suspect that they come from a nonkosher animal. The *Bet Yosef*, citing Harav Yaakov Weil, explained that although the great majority of tendons that are sold are those of kosher animals, we must regard it as if 50% are from kosher animals and 50% from nonkosher animals. In that case, since we are dealing with a Torah law, we must assume the stringent position. See more about this in the

ולוקחין הגידין שיש בעקב שהם לבנים, ואם הם קשים מרככים באבנים וכיוצא בזה, עד שיעשו כפשתן, וטווין אותם ושוזרין אותם. ובהן תופרין התפילין ויריעות ספר תורה. [רמב"ם שם, ובמשנ"ב ס"ק רכב, קול יעקב ס"ק רכד]. ולכתחילה טוב שיעשה הטויה "לשם קדושת תפילין". [ראה קול יעקב ס"ק רכה, ובמשנ"ב ס"ק רכב]

קצד. יתפור שלושה תפירות בכל אחד מארבעת צדדי התיתורא. [ראה ש"ע סעיף נא]. ויהיו שנים עשר תפירות, כנגד שנים עשר שבטי ישראל (תמונה קי"ד). [משנ"ב ס"ק רכח]. אולם אם עשה רק עשר תפירות או פחות מזה לא נפסל. [רמ"א שם, וכ"ה בב"י]. וכן אם הוסיף על שנים עשר תפירות, אינו נפסל. [קול יעקב ס"ק רלד בשם הב"י]

№ 113) since it then helps to atone for the sin of the Golden Calf. This is the common custom.[166]

The tendons over the animal's heel are used, since they are bright white. If they are hard and stiff, they can be beaten with stones until they have the consistency of flax. The fibers are then spun into thread. For sewing tefillin, thin thread is used, while thicker threads are used for sewing together the sheets of parchment of a Torah scroll.[167] It is recommended that the person who spins the thread first declare that he is doing so for the sake of the sanctity of tefillin.[168]

Twelve stitches

194) The tefillin are sewn with three stitches on each side of the *titura*, for a total of twelve stitches, which corresponds to the twelve Tribes of Yisrael. (Illustration № 114) If someone sewed only ten stitches, or even less, the tefillin are still kosher. Likewise, if someone sewed more than twelve stitches the tefillin are kosher.[169]

Mishna Berura (32:225) and the *Kol Yaakov* (32:227). Nowadays, we purchase the threads ready-made from stores specializing in tefillin needs.

166. The *Sefer Yere'im* (#399) and *Ateret Tzevi* (32:97) explained this connection between tefillin threads and the Golden Calf. Regarding the hair wound around the scrolls, it was explained in halakha 177 that it is best to use calf hairs for the same reason. The *Halakha Berura* (page 460) explained that regarding the threads we prefer tendons of full-grown bulls, since we want strong threads that will not tear when pulled tight.

167. The *Kol Yaakov* (32:224) testified that in Baghdad the custom was to use the tendons on the flanks, which are likewise bright white.

168. The *Magen Avraham* ruled that the threads must be spun for the sake of the sanctity of tefillin, and the *Tehilla leDavid* concurred, ruling that it is doubtful that one may recite the blessing on tefillin sewn with threads that were not spun with this intention. The *Mishna Berura* (32:225) and the *Kol Yaakov* (32:225), however, cited many *Aharonim* who ruled that the threads do not need to be spun with any specific intentions. This is likewise the ruling of the *Halakha Berura* (page 461). Of course, the tefillin must be sewn shut for the sake of the sanctity of tefillin.

169. Rambam ruled (*Hilkhot Tefillin* 3:10) that if someone wishes, he may make only ten stitches, or he may make fourteen stitches. The *Hagahot Maimoniyot* (*Hilkhot Tefillin* 3:6) explained that if we subtract the tribe of Yehuda since the royal family comes from there, and subtract the tribe of Levi since they serve in the *Bet Hamikdash*, we are left with ten "ordinary" tribes. Alternatively, if we count all twelve of Yaakov's sons and add to them Menashe and Efrayim, we will have fourteen. Thus, the numbers ten and fourteen have the significance of representing the tribes of Yisrael.

ומנהג העולם לעשות ארבעה נקבים בארבע רוחות, ועוד שני נקבים בכל צד באמצע. ויחד הם י״ב נקבים.

קצה. ראוי לעשות את הנקבים במרחק שוה זה מזה משום נוי התפילין (תמונה קס״ו), אך אינו לעיכובא כלל, וכשירות גם לכתחילה אף אם אין המרחק בין נקב לנקב שוה. אולם יקפיד מאוד שישמר ריבוע התפירות שהוא לעיכובא, וכמבואר לעיל הלכה קמ״ג. [ראה פסקי תשובות סוף אות סד בשם הזכרון אליהו]

קצו. חוט התפירה יהיה סובב משתי רוחות. [ש״ע שם], כלומר, שכל התפירה יהא מסובבת משני צדדין פנים ואחור (תמונה קס״ז). נמצא תופר בשתי מחטין, אחת יוצאת לאחור ואחת נכנסת לצד פנים. [משנ״ב ס״ק רכט עפ״ד הב״י], ובזה התפירה ניכרת משני צדדים, על כל אורך ורוחב התיתורא, ולא בסירוגין. ואם תפר רק מצד אחד פסול. [קול יעקב ס״ק רלב]

קצז. שנים עשר תפירות אלו יהיו בחוט אחד. [ש״ע סעיף נא]. ואם יש לו חוט קצר, רשאי לחבר אליו חוט אחר, לעשותו כחוט אחד, ולתפור בו (תמונה קס״ז). [ראה משנ״ב ס״ק רלא]. ומשום הידור תופרים בחוט אחד בלי שום קשירה. [ראה פסקי תשובות אות עו בשם הזכרון אליהו]

The common custom, in order to sew twelve stitches, is to drill a hole in each of the four corners and two more holes on each side between the corners. This makes a total of twelve holes.

Symmetrical stitching

195) The twelve holes should be positioned equidistant from one another, giving the tefillin the beauty of symmetry. (Illustration №115) If the technician makes some of the holes closer together and others further apart, however, the tefillin are perfectly kosher. The only thing that really matters is that the stitches form a perfect square, as explained above in halakha 143.

Stitching twice around the *titura*

196) The thread is run two times around the *titura*, once clockwise and once counterclockwise, so that it covers the twelve stitches above the *titura* and below it. (Illustration №116) If the thread is run only once around the *titura*, leaving every other stitch blank, the tefillin are not kosher.

Using a single thread

197) All twelve stitches should be made with a single thread.[170] If the person sewing the tefillin finds that his thread is too short to make it all the way around two times, he may tie another thread to the one he is using and then use

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The *Bet Yosef* derived from the *Shimusha Rabba* that if someone sews less than ten stitches, the tefillin are not kosher. The *Mordekhi*, however, ruled that even if one sews less than ten or more than fourteen stitches the tefillin are kosher. The *Bet Yosef* concluded that this seems to concur with the opinion of Rambam and the overwhelming majority of the *Poskim*. This is likewise the ruling of Rama and other *Aḥaronim*.

170. The source for this is Rabbenu Yosef Askandarani, cited in the *Bet Yosef*. The *Levush* (32:51) added that this is an ancient tradition and that it enhances the