יג. אם נתקלף השחור ברוחב הרצועה, ונותר שחור בשיעור רוחב הרצועה (1 ס״מ), כשר (תמונה קמ״ב). אולם אם לא נותר שחור בשיעור רוחב רצועה (שאין שחור בשיעור 1 ס״מ), אף שיש מכשירים גם את זה מדין ״רובו ככולו״, למעשה נראה להחמיר בזה, וישחיר כל רוחב הרצועה. [ראה אול״צ ח״ב עמ׳ רפד, ובפסקי תשובות סוף אות ו]

יד. ברצועות המצויות כיום שמשחירים אותם משני צידיהם, ואף תוכם ספוג בצבע שחור, אין כל חשש שנקלף הצבע המבריק שבחוץ, כיון שאף תוכו צבוע בשחור, ואין כאן שום חלק שהלבין. (תמונה קמ״ג)

Across the strap's width

13) If a spot along the width of the strap loses its black color, but there still is a full centimeter along its width that is black, it is kosher. (Illustration № 142) If at any point the black section is less than one centimeter wide, however, the strap is not kosher for use. Although some *Poskim* ruled leniently in this case, applying the principle of *rubo kekhulo*, one should not rely on that ruling, and one should make sure that the strap is black all across its width.[197]

Black through and through

14) Nowadays, it is common to use tefillin straps that are blackened on all sides, and which have soaked the black dye through the thickness of the leather. Even if the glossy black coating on the outside peels off, it is still perfectly kosher since every surface is black.[198] (Illustration № 143)

Day 54

Yaakov Yisrael Kanyevski was very careful to make sure that his tefillin straps were entirely black. This is the recommended attitude.

197. The strap's width

As explained above in *Siman* 27, the minimum width of tefillin straps is the length of a barley corn. According to Harav Avraham Hayim Na'eh (*Shi'ure Torah* Vol. I, #3:37), this means one centimeter. Maran the Rishon Letziyon (responsa *Yabia Omer* Vol. IX, #97:22) concurred with this definition. In the previous footnote, the discussion was about the length of the strap, and the conclusion was that one ought to adopt the stringent view and not rely on the principle of *rubo kekhulo*. Here, the discussion is about the width of the strap.

The average tefillin strap used today is 14 or 15 centimeters wide. If the edges begin to lose their black color, there is still a full centimeter of black strap in its center, so it will be kosher even without relying on the principle of *rubo kekhulo*. As explained in the previous footnote, the *Or Letziyon* and *Halakha Berura* ruled that as long as the minimum area of the strap is black, it is kosher even though the extra area has lost its black color.

What if the strap was scratched down the middle, leaving less than a centimeter of black strap to either side of the scratch, but more than a centimeter if we combine the two sides? The responsa *Kinyan Torah* (Vol. VI, #1) ruled that if a hole is punctured in the middle of a tefillin strap, we can combine the two sides and say that the strap is kosher. Therefore, the owner may use his tefillin and recite the blessing on it. The same should apply to a strap with a spot in its center that is no longer black.

If the tefillin strap is exactly a centimeter wide and the edge loses its black color, the *Or Letziyon* ruled that as long as the majority of its width is black the strap is kosher, applying the principle of *rubo kekhulo*. This concurs with the ruling of the *Salmat Hayim* and Harav Shim'on Greenfeld. This ruling seems to be a contradiction to the *Or Letziyon's* definition, cited in the previous footnote, of the status of a portion of a tefillin strap that is not black, explaining that we must view any portion not painted black as if it was severed from the strap. At any rate, according to the *Poskim* who ruled that one cannot apply the principle of *rubo kekhulo* to tefillin straps, it would not be kosher in this case.

198. This was already mentioned in the footnote to halakha 9. Even though the strap is kosher either way, the *Yafe Lalev* recommended that the outer side of the strap be painted a glossy black.

טו. לכתחילה ישחיר את הרצועות לשמן, "לשם קדושת תפילין". וגם ישחירם ישראל ולא גוי. [ראה ש"ע ס"ד]. ובדיעבד שלא השחירם לשמה, או שהשחירם גוי, התפילין כשרות לדעת מרן השלחן ערוך. [ראה קול יעקב ס"ק יד וס"ק יז. ובאול"צ ח"ב עמ' רפד]. ואף יכול לברך עליהם. [הלכה ברורה עמ' תצא] ולמנהג האשכנזים, פסול אפילו בדיעבד. [ראה ברמ"א שם ובמשנ"ב ס"ק כב-כג]

With the correct intentions

15) It is best that, before painting the strap black, one declare that one is doing this for the sake of the sanctity of tefillin. Also, the straps should not be painted by a non-Jew. If the straps were painted by a non-Jew or if a Jew failed to have the necessary intentions when he painted the straps, the straps are still kosher according to the *Shulḥan Arukh*,[199] and one may recite the blessing over them.[200] Ashkenazic Jews, however, follow the opinion that the straps are not at all kosher.

199. The words of the *Shulḥan Arukh* (33:4) are: "It is recommended that a Jew blacken them with intentions for the mitzvah of tefillin, and not to have a non-Jew blacken them." The Rama added, "If a non-Jew painted the *battim* black, the tefillin are kosher, but if a non-Jew painted the straps black, they are not kosher." That is, according to Rama it is not imperative to have the *battim* painted black, and so they are kosher even if a non-Jew painted them. The straps, however, must be painted black, as this is the *halakha leMoshe miSinai*, and therefore only a Jew may paint them and he must do so with the proper intentions. According to the *Shulḥan Arukh*, it is not imperative that the straps be painted with any specific intentions. See above in *Siman* 32:147 and 148.

The *Zivḥe Tzedek*, cited by the *Kol Yaakov* (33:17), ruled that if a non-Jew paints the straps black they are kosher, since we follow the rulings of the *Shulḥan Arukh*. According to Ashkenazic Jews the straps are not kosher, but the *Aḥaronim* debated whether they can be made kosher by having a Jew paint them a second time with the proper intentions, as explained below in this footnote. The *Ben Ish Ḥai* (*parashat Ḥaye Sara* halakha 4) ruled that the straps are not kosher if a non-Jew painted them black.

Using an electric painting machine

Many *Poskim* ruled that an electric machine may not be used wherever an act requires specific intentions. See the responsa *Yabia Omer* (Vol. VI, #1) and the *Yalkut Yosef Tzitzit English Edition* (*Siman* 11:7). It is recommended not to use tzitzit strands that were spun by electric machine, even if the operator had the proper intentions when he turned the machine on. Nevertheless, there is a solid halakhic basis to rely upon if someone uses machine-spun strands. Regarding tefillin straps, there is even more room for leniency since Maran ruled that the straps would be kosher even if someone painted them black without any specific intentions. If someone is particular to use tefillin straps that were painted by hand, he will receive a special blessing from Heaven. For Ashkenazic Jews, this stringency is more significant.

Painting a second time with proper intentions

If someone painted tefillin straps without the proper intentions, the *Magen Avraham* ruled that it is possible to remedy them by painting them a second time with the proper intentions. The *Peri Megadim* and other *Aḥaronim*, however, rejected this leniency, and their ruling is cited by the *Mishna Berura* (33:24) and the *Kol Yaakov* 33:17).

Painting a second time without intentions

If someone painted straps with the proper intentions, but afterward someone painted them a second time without the proper intentions, the *Minḥat Yitzḥak* and *Shevet Halevi*, cited in *Halakha Berura* (page 492), ruled that the straps are still kosher. The *Shevet Halevi* had reservations about this lenient ruling, however, since it is possible that the second painting voids the first one.

Clear gloss over the black paint

All the *Poskim* agreed that it is permissible to cover the black paint with a clear gloss and that this may be done by machine. The responsa *Shevet Halevi* (Vol. V, #13) recommended that people avoid using a machine to add a layer of glossy black paint over the first layer of black paint. For Sefardic Jews, this should be permissible, since there are multiple arguments to allow it. First of all, even if the straps were painted without any intentions they are kosher. Second, perhaps the intentions of the operator of the machine help to make it kosher. Third, since they were already painted with the proper intentions, it could be that the second coat does not void those intentions. At any rate, if someone avoids relying on this leniency he will receive a special blessing from Heaven.

200. The *Halakha Berura* (page 491) ruled that one may recite the blessing on tefillin with straps that were

טז. אשה מותרת להשחיר רצועות התפילין לכתחילה, אף למנהג האשכנזים, כיון שהיא יודעת לעשות לשמה כמו איש. [משנ"ב ס"ק כג, קול יעקב סי' לט ס"ק יח]. וכן כשישראל עומד על גבי גוי או קטן, יכולים להשחיר התפילין אף לכתחילה. [שם]. ומכל מקום טוב להחמיר לעשות הכל על ידי ישראל גדול, ולא על ידי מי שאינו בתורת קשירה. [ראה פסקי תשובות אות ז בשם המהרש"ג]. וראה לקמן בסימן ל"ט הלכה ט'.

דיני רצועה שנקרעה

Women and children

16) A woman may blacken tefillin straps. Even Ashkenazic Jews permit this, since a Jewish woman is capable of having the proper intentions just as well as a Jewish man. In fact, it is possible to employ a non-Jew or a Jewish child to paint the straps black, as long a Jew stands over him and instructs him to have intentions for the sanctity of tefillin.[201] Nevertheless, it is best to employ only a Jewish adult male, who has the advantage of being obligated to fulfill the mitzvah of tefillin. See below in *Siman* 39:9.

Tefillin Straps That Have Snapped

painted without the proper intentions. Even though some *Poskim* ruled that the straps are not kosher, we may rely on Maran's ruling in the *Shulhan Arukh*. See the responsa *Yabia Omer* (Vol. IX, #97:22).

201. The *Mishna Berura* (33:23) explained that there are a number of steps in the making of tefillin *battim* that are *halakha leMoshe miSinai*. These steps are crucial, and if they are not performed the tefillin are not kosher. This includes the shaping of the square *battim*, the forming of the letter *shin* on the *bayit*, sewing the *bayit* shut, and tying the strap into a knot. If a Jew performs any of these tasks without the proper intentions, the tefillin are not kosher. One should not employ a Jewish woman to perform any of these tasks, nor should one employ a Jewish child, even if an adult stands over him and instructs him to have the proper intentions. (See below in *Siman* 39:9.) The act of painting the tefillin straps black, however, is not connected to the making of the *battim*. Therefore, it is permissible to employ a Jewish woman, who understands the concept of having the proper intentions, to paint them. The *Kol Yaakov* (39:18) concurred with this ruling.

Harav Shim'on Greenfeld (responsa Vol. I, #7), however, ruled that a Jewish woman should not be employed to paint tefillin straps since women are not obligated to fulfill the mitzvah of tefillin, and tefillin should be made entirely by people who are obligated to fulfill that mitzvah. This is likewise the opinion of the *Melekhet Shamayim*, cited by the *Kol Yaakov*. Both Sefardic and Ashkenazic Jews may rely on the lenient opinion, but it is best to have the straps painted by an adult Jewish male.