

Chapter 25

Black inside and outside

Tephillin today are made to much higher standard than when I had reached the age of Barmitzvah.

A few months prior to my Barmitzvah, my maternal grandmother gave my mother the sum of £6 (six pounds sterling) to buy me a tallit and tephillin and other things relevant for my Barmitzvah. We then went to a Jewish bookshop in London and purchased these things. The tephillin cost £3. In those days the only tephillin one saw in the London area, even amongst Rabbis, were “peshutot.” And they were very small. At the time, I saw that the tephillin had a seal on them testifying that they were kosher.

The first day I put on tephillin was 26 Tishri 1955, which was just over a month before my Barmitzvah, and I am pleased to say that since then I have never missed a day when I was required to put on tephillin.

It was about a year later, that I saw the gidim which sewed up my shel rosh were rubbing and I was worried that they would break. I therefore went back to the shop where I bought them and the salesman there put some implement between the gidim and the tephillin bayit to show that the gidim were still thick and there was no chance of them breaking.

Soon after I arrived in Israel in 1966, I decided that I wanted better quality tephillin and I went to a shop in Tel Aviv which had been recommended to me. There I purchased a pair which had the wording on the cover to the tephillin that they were “gasot”. I must admit that in those days I was not sufficiently knowledgeable to be able to distinguish dakot from gasot. Whilst in Yeshivah I was informed that these tephillin, (despite what was written on the cover) were in fact dakot, and that the price I had paid was the price demanded for gasot!

Most people don't know what the inside of tephillin looks like. So, when one day whilst learning with my chavruta in Yeshivah, during the month

of Elul, someone who was near us was opening up a pair of tephillin to check them. I suggested to my chavruta that we watch what they are doing. My chavruta disagreed, claiming that this would be bitul Torah! I am sure that one would learn more in spending a half an hour on watching what was being done to the Tephillin than one would learn during a whole morning studying Gemara.

When in the early 1970s, I was Director of Jewish Studies in a Jewish school in Liverpool, I wrote practical programme for the Barmitzvah class on Tephillin. I ordered parchment, ink, a quill pen making instrument and gidim from a sofer, and I also obtained old tephillin from a shul genizah. Each pupil received a small piece of parchment, made himself a quill pen and copied on his piece of parchment some sample letters which I had written on the blackboard. The old tephillin were dissected and the pupils could thus see how the batim were constructed and how the parshiot were inserted into them. I am pleased to say that this course was extremely successful and the boys did exceptionally well in the subsequent examination. The boys also realised the importance of Tephillin and I was told that one boy even put them on before he came to shul on the Shabbat of his Barmitzvah! When I spoke to him afterwards, he told me that he knew that one does not put on Tephillin on Shabbat but he regarded his Barmitzvah Shabbat as a special Shabbat.

I cannot recollect the date, but I estimate that it was about the year 2000, that my son-in-law Baruch (who was in 2014 murdered in a terrorist attack) wanted new tephillin and he asked me to get some price quotes. There is in Kiryat Arba a battim-macher (a person who makes Batim). He gave me a list of prices and Baruch chose the most expensive. After they had been made, I saw that they were better than mine, and I accordingly ordered a similar pair from him. Whenever I speak at Baruch's yahrzeit each year, I relate that it is due to him that I now have higher quality Tephillin, and therefore every day he gets in Heaven some of the praise for this.

Another hidur which began a number of years ago was to have tephillin straps which were black from side to side and I changed by tephillin straps for such straps. A few months later, a rather interesting thing happened

with these Tephillin straps and also to those of another person who bought them from the same source. What occurred in both these cases was that the strap around the head took on a brown colour. I painted them over with tephillin black and the problem has not repeated itself.

About a year ago, Baruch's eldest son Itai, reached the age of Barmitzvah and I ordered tephillin for him. There is a sofer in Kiryat Arba who writes tephillin according to the Sephardi tradition and he wrote the parshiot. They were then checked by another sofer and also by computer and I received a photocopy of the parshiot. The batimmacher who made Baruch's and my batim then made them for Itai. I could see when they arrived that they were even better than mine. In addition, Itai received two further pairs of tephillin from organisations who give tephillin to orphans whose parent was killed in a terrorist attack, and each time it was accompanied by a ceremony at the Kotel. He could have got a further two pairs, but declined them. Three pairs were enough! I also have Baruch's tephillin in my apartment, and when Itai is in Kiryat Arba he uses his father's tephillin.

It was in about the summer of 2019 that the Batim Macher who made my family's tephillin said something to me which gave me the idea to write a paper on the blackening of the tephillin straps on both sides. His uncle had been a great Rabbi in Europe and had written a book on tephillin. Entitled "Gidulai Aharon." He showed me what his uncle had written on blackening the straps on both sides.

As with all research one has to first assemble the research material. Today with the internet it is far, far easier to accomplish this. An important source on the internet is HebrewBooks, which has well over 50,000 books and one can freely download pages from them, or indeed even the entire book.

In addition, information which I found on the internet included a newspaper article warning people to beware of fake tephillin straps! Needless to add that not everything that I downloaded from the internet was used in writing my paper – sometimes the same information appeared in more than one source, and sometimes when studying the download, it was found not to be directly relevant.

One point that initially caused me confusion was that there are two (or even three) books all entitled “Baruch Sheamar” on tephillin, which are written by completely different authors.

I researched numerous aspects regarding blackening the straps. These included the source of the ink and what ingredients can or cannot be used to make the blacking material, the colour of the blackening material, who can and cannot do the blackening, what percentage of the outer side of the straps has to be blackened, whether the inner side of the straps has to be blackened, or can they be of a different colour, contemporary attitudes towards tephillin blackened from side to side, and other points.

If the colour of the inside of the straps is not important, it might well be permitted to write one’s name on the back of the straps. Whilst I was in the school in Liverpool, we told the pupils to write their names on the back of the straps so they could easily identify them. The only exclusion was not to write them in red.

There is a Rabbinical organisation in Jerusalem where one can send via the internet halachic questions and one receives a very prompt answer. I submitted several questions on the ingredients for the blackening material and received answers within a few hours. To one of my questions they replied that it was interesting and that they had not seen a source which answered this question, and instead they gave me a plausible suggestion.

Another piece of information I obtained was from a shiur of Yeshivah University which had been put onto the internet. A shiur on the internet, which was given in the Montreal Torah Center, quoted from the Rishon, the Mordechi. My Shas did not include this and I asked the person who gave the shiur to scan it and send it to me, which he did. Later I also found it on the Oz veHadar edition of their Shas, which contains commentaries not found in most editions of the Shas.

Although I had found almost all the references, I required on HebrewBooks, they were a few which were not there, and I accordingly made a list of these books. I then first went to the Yeshivat Nir library in Kiryat Arba (which incidentally I started about 50 years ago when it was

Yeshivat Mitnachalei Hevron in the Memshal building in Hebron). Even after searching in that library, there were still a few books which I required, and for these I went to the Israel National Library in Jerusalem.

I wrote as an annex to my paper the problem that strict vegetarians have to observe the mitzvah of tephillin, since they are made almost exclusively from animal parts. One solution is to use animals who have died naturally. One of the pupils at my former school Carmel College and the youngest son of its Principal and Founder, is David Rosen, who was once the Chief Rabbi of Ireland (and not the Chief Rabbi of Israel, as incorrectly published in an article on this subject), and is today the American Jewish Committee's (AJC) International Director of Interreligious Affairs. He is very much for vegetarianism and is the Honorary President of the International Jewish Vegetarian and Ecology society, and he regards using such an animal which has died naturally as a hidur mitzvah for tephillin.

After assembling (or more accurately whilst assembling) all the information, I wrote up the first draft of my paper, and I then checked it point by point against the original sources. Following checking the Hebrew text for grammatical and stylish errors, a final copy was made and printed out.

When I write a paper, I also photocopy the relevant sections of the source material, unless it is something which is to be found almost everywhere, such as Talmud, Shulchan Aruch, Mishnah Berurah etc. I then add these photocopies after the text of my paper.

After all this had been done, I printed out a number of copies and distributed them to people and libraries who had provided me with materials, or had assisted me with my research. I also put a copy of my paper together with the source material on my website.

MAKING OF TEPHILLIN BATIM

- 1) A skin of a Kosher animal is placed in a bath of lime water and left soaking there for several days to burn off hair.
- 2) Using a metal form (4 metal forms for head Tephillin) and a press, the skin is then pushed into shape.
- 3) The קְרִיאתוֹת and $\text{פְּסָקֵי הַתּוֹרָה}$ are then shaped.
- 4) The 4 compartments of the head Tephillin are compressed together.
- 5) The sides of the Tephillin are ground down to make the $\text{פְּסָקֵי הַתּוֹרָה}$ completely square.
- 6) A "Shin" is chiselled on either side of the head Tephillin.
- 7) The Tephillin are finally blackened.

Sample page I wrote and was then given to pupils of the Jewish High School in Liverpool – 1970s

Books and Materials required.

- (1) Chumash.
- (2) Singer's Prayer Book.
The above two books must be brought to lessons when required.
- (3) The materials used for the writing and construction of Tephillin - these can be obtained from a Sofer:-
 - (i) Sheets of parchment.
 - (ii) Parchment already cut to size for Shel Yad and Shel Rosh.
 - (iii) Instrument for ruling lines on parchment (Avil)
 - (iv) Quill pen and reed pen.
 - (v) Quill clipper.
 - (vi) Special ink used for writing
 - (vii) Hairs of a calf used for winding around the Parshiot.
 - (viii) Sinews (Gidim) used to sew up the Tephillin.
 - (ix) Tephillin blackening.
4. A supply of feathers which are suitable for the making of quill pens (turkey feathers are recommended) at least one per pupil is required.
5. Rulers.
6. Scissors.
7. If it can be arranged, a Sofer should come to the school to demonstrate the actual writing of Tephillin.
8. Sample Parshiot of the Shel Yad and Shel Rosh (These can be taken from old Tephillin)
9. If possible, samples of skin and forms used for the making of the Batim of the Shel Yad and Shel Rosh
10. Colour filmstrip entitled "How Tephillin are made" Part 1 and Part 2 together with "Teacher Narration Sheet and Student Review Sheet" produced in co-operation with Torah Umesorah's Department of Education, 156 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10010, U.S.A. (complete series copyrighted by Avi Shulman)
11. A number of pairs of old Tephillin for "dissection" - can possibly be obtained from local Synagogue (After the course, the Tephillin can be put together again, and sewn up and used again during the following year)
12. Calipers.

Reference from your Shiur for the Mordechi

1 message

chaimsimons@gmail.com <website_form@chabad.org>

Wed, Jul 10, 2019 at 3:14 PM

Reply-To: chaimsimons@gmail.com

To: "Rabbi Levi Y. New - Montreal Torah Center" <chaimsimons@gmail.com>

*** COPY ***

Date Sent: 7/10/2019 8:14:33 AM EST

Name: Chaim Simons

Email: chaimsimons@gmail.com

Subject: Reference from your Shiur for the Mordechi

Shalom Harav

In your very interesting Shiur on 15 April 2019, on Menachos 35a "White Round Tefillin" you quoted the Mordechai. Despite extensive searching I cannot locate this Mordechai and would be very grateful if you could please tell me the exact location.

With thanks

Chaim Simons

Montreal Torah Center
Bais Menachen Chabad Lubavitch
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Canada.

Tel ⁰³ 514 739 0770

Shiur by Rabbi Levi Y.

White Round Tefillin

Talmud Menachot #046 35a (2)

15 April 2019

Mordechai uJant 20 minutes
or 22 minutes

Cylindric shaped Batim of Tephilin

Can't find Mordechai on Menachot.

where ~~is~~ is the Mordechai quoted in Shiur

on 10.7.19 15:5 sent an e-mail letter (to his e-mail) asking for exact location of the Mordechai

My search for one of the references in my paper

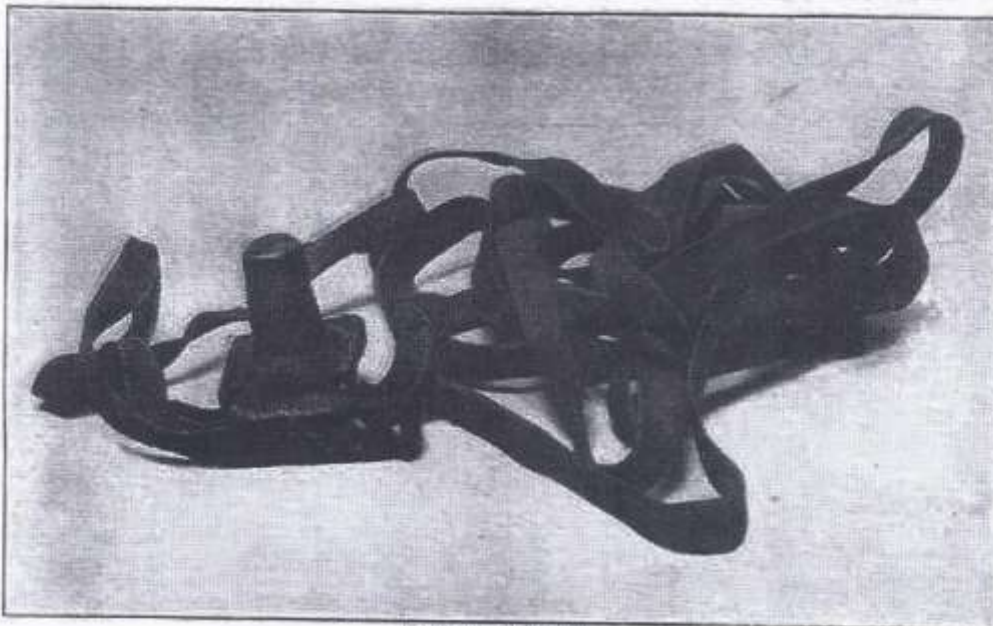
tains traces of cabalistic influence is recited by some before putting on the tefillin. After the tefillin are laid Ex. xiii. 1-16 is recited. In removing the tefillin the three twistings on the middle finger are loosened first; then the head-phylactery is removed; and finally the hand-phylactery (Men. 36e). It is customary to lay and to remove the tefillin while standing; also to kiss them when they are taken from and returned to the phylactery-bag (Orah Hayyim, 28, 2, 3).

Originally tefillin were worn all day, but not during the night (Men. 86b). Now the prevailing custom is to wear them during the daily morning service only (comp. Ber. 14b). They are not worn on Sabbaths and holy days; for these, being in themselves "signs," render the tefillin, which are to serve

is engaged in the study of the Law (R. Jonah to Alfasi on Ber. ii. 5, s. v. "Le-Memra"), and scribes of and dealers in tefillin and mezuzot while engaged in their work if it can not be postponed, are also free from this obligation (Suk. 26a; Orah Hayyim, 38, 8-10). It is not permitted to enter a cemetery (Ber. 18a) or any unseemly place (ib. 23a; Shab. 10a), or to eat a regular meal or to sleep (Ber. 23b; Suk. 26a), while wearing tefillin. The bag used for tefillin should not be used for any other purpose, unless a condition was expressly made that it might be used for any purpose (Ber. 23b; Sanh. 48a).

Maimonides ("Yad," l. c. iv. 25, 26) concludes the laws of tefillin with the following exhortation (the references are not in Maimonides):

"The sanctity of tefillin is very great (comp. Shab. 49a;



PHYLACTERY FOR ARM.
(From the Cairo Genizah.)

as signs themselves (Ex. xiii. 9, 16), unnecessary (Men. 36b; 'Er. 96a). In those places where tefillin are worn on the week-days of the festivals (see HOLY DAYS), and on New Moons, they are removed before the "Musaf" prayer (Orah Hayyim, 25, 18).

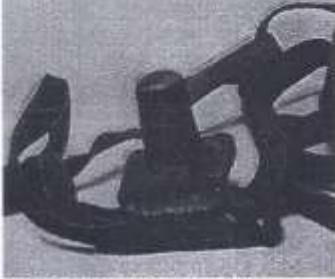
The duty of laying tefillin rests upon males after the age of thirteen years and one day. Women are exempt from the obligation, as are also slaves and minors (Ber. 20a). Women who wish to lay tefillin are precluded from doing so (Orah Hayyim, 38, 3, Iseries' gloss); in ancient times this was not the case ('Er. 96a, b). A mourner during the first day of his mourning period (M. K. 16a; Suk. 25b), a bridegroom on his wedding-day (Suk. l. c.), an excommunicate, and a leper (M. K. 15a) are also exempt. A sufferer from stomach-trouble (Hal. 110a), one who is otherwise in pain and can not concentrate his mind ("Yad," l. c. iv. 13), one who

Masseket Tefillin, toward the end; Zohar, section "Wa'et'hanan," p. 209b). As long as the tefillin are on the head and on the arm of a man, he is modest and God-fearing and will not be attracted by hilarity or idle talk, and will have no evil thoughts, but will devote all his thoughts to truth and righteousness (comp. Men. 43b; "Sefer Hasidim," § 554). Therefore, every man ought to try to have the tefillin upon him the whole day (Masseket Tefilla, l. c.; comp. Sifre to Deut. v. 9); for only in this way can he fulfil the commandment. It is related that Rab (Abba Arika), the pupil of our holy teacher (R. Judah ha-Nasi), was never seen to walk four cubits without a Torah, without fringes on his garments ("pigul"), and without tefillin (Suk. 29a, where R. Johanan b. Zakkai and R. Eliezer are mentioned; comp. Meg. 34a, where R. Zera is mentioned). Although the Law enjoins the wearing of tefillin the whole day, it is especially commendable to wear them during prayer. The sages say that one who reads the Shema without tefillin is as if he scolded falsely against himself (Ber. 14b, 15a). He who does not lay tefillin transgresses eight commandments (Men. 44a; comp. R. H. 17a); for in each of the four Biblical passages there is a commandment to wear tefillin on the head and on the arm. But he who is accustomed to wear tefillin will live long, as it is written, 'When the Lord is upon them they will live' (Isa. xxxviii. 18, Hebr.; comp. A. V.; Men. 44a).

A photograph of cylindrical Tephillin found in the Cairo Genizah

File:Cairo Genizah tefillin shel yad.jpg

From Wikimedia Commons, the free media repository



No higher resolution available.

Cairo_Genizah_tefillin_shel_yad.jpg (226 × 190 pixels, file size: 22 KB, MIME type: image/jpeg)

[Open in Media Viewer](#)

File information **Structured data**

Captions

Edit

English

Add a one-line explanation of what this file represents

Summary

Description	English: Cylindrical arm-tefillin found in the Cairo genizah.
Date	1906
Source	jewishencyclopedia.com (http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/images.jsp?artid=290&letter=P&imgid=1546)
Author	Julius H. Greenstone, Joseph Jacobs, Ludwig Blau, Emil G. Hirsch

Cylindrical Tephillin found in the Cairo Genizah

6569408 1135 22.7.19 14¹⁵

Spoke to his wife
He is the one who sent me an e-mail
He will be in about 14-17.

052 7643066

22.7.19 14¹⁵

Spoke to onni suggested there could be
difference if wine red is made by a 'id
making it of oso. 2nd ~~case~~ case wine made by

a non-Jewish factory which is non-Kasher from
the outset.

He said it was a very interesting question
and he would look into it.

I said I would contact him next week.

30.7.19 14⁰⁵

Telephoned onni and asked him if he had
an answer to my question. He had it
and I said I would submit a question to
1'2. (i.e. Rabbi who answer questions from the public)

My telephonic enquiries in connection with ingredients for Tephillin blackening material

בחדש נובמבר 2019 מערכת יהול הספרייה תשודרג לתוכנה חדשה - "עלמא".
 לאחר השדרוג, קטלוג זה ("אלף") לא יפעל יותר. קטלוג הספרייה - מרחב ימשיך לפעול כרגיל.

תצוגת רשומה

הוסף למדף אלקטרוני שמורשלה איתור

תצוגת רשומה מלאה | תצוגת רשומה מקוצרת | כרטיסיות | תצוגת MARC Tags

שם סדרף	A 4946 2015
שם ראשי	אלישיב, יוסף שלום בן אברהם, 1910-2012, מחבר
כותר	עלילת השמנה חסה : אורי פסקים מסאגות / עורך ומסדר ... למי שזר ארבעה חלקי שאלון שרף וכסוף תמונת בנייני המוקנה והניחם פנים עם העולם ופרוץ תמונת שקלית כספ ודחוב משה / משה בלאספרי הר"ר עמרם וריר.
כותר חסף	שאלת השמנה חסה חסה חסנת משה וכתב משה מחדויות ר' אברהם רייז.
מחברות	ירשלים : [משה פרין], תשע"ג (2012)-תשע"ט [2018]. (Jerusalem) (Israel)
דפוס	4 כרכים (חלק ב-ה) : קטלוגים ; 25 ס"מ. השנה בדרך ב ע"י המספריים.
מקום קשור	ב. אורי פסקים השמנה חסה... מן הגיליוט אלישיב. תשע"ג [2012] 8 עמודים לא מספריים, 21 יו-טו עמודים, 8 עמודים לא מספריים. ג. אורי פסקים השמנה חסה... כרך חזר אלישיב. תשע"ג 24 עמודים לא מספריים, יו. חזר עמודים. ד. אורי פסקים השמנה חסה... כרך חזר אלישיב. תשע"ג 32 עמודים לא מספריים, חקלנו עמודים. ה. השמנה חסה... בית המדרש. תשע"ג 16 עמודים לא מספריים, חסנת עמודים, 2 עמודים לא מספריים.
תאריך	Elyashiv, Yosef Shalom, 1910- = Anecdotes
נושאים	Responsa - 20th century Rabbinical literature - Israel
מחבר שותף	פרין, משה בן עמרם. וכתב משה
סוג חומר	BOOK
מספר מקורי	003423291
קישור קבוע	http://oleph.nli.org.il/80F/?func=direct&doc_number=003423291&local_base=NNL01
מיקום	מיקום אלקטרוני



2016A 4946

blackening of inside of Tefillin

Catalogue entry of one of the books I referred to at the Israel National Library and the relevant information which it contained