HOLY WRITTEN OBJECTS

INTRODUCTION TO HOLY WRITTEN OBJECTS

Introduction to Holy Written Objects

By surrounding ourselves with reminders of the commandments and with objects for observing the various Jewish rituals, we can be constantly aware of what we should be doing to live our lives as Jews.
There are two categories of items used for *mitzvot*:

- Holy items (*tashmishei kedusha*), such as *tefilin* and its boxes, *Torah* books and commentaries, and *Torah* scrolls and covers.
- Items used for *mitzvot (tashmishei mitzva)*, such as *lulav*, *etrog*, and *talit/tzitzit*.

Women

Sacred scrolls (*Torah*, *mezuza*, *tefilin*) may not be written by women for sacred purposes. However, if they were written by a woman, you may study from them. You may not use them for public *Torah* reading, putting on *tefilin*, or affixing to doorposts (for *mezuza*).

Disposal

Both *tashmishei kedusha* and *tashmishei mitzva* should be disposed of in a respectful manner. *Tashmishei kedusha* should ideally be buried. Newspapers with *Torah* or *Torah* commentary must be double-wrapped and then may be put in the trash, since they contain material that should not be buried with holy writings (only a newspaper's *Torah* or *Torah* commentary contain inherent holiness).
To dispose of *tashmishei mitzva*, you may wrap in one layer of plastic and throw it in normal garbage.

SHEIMOT

SHEIMOT: WHAT ARE SHEIMOT

Sheimot: Definition

Sheimot/sheimos are written items with:

- God's name in *Hebrew* or even in other languages;
- Three consecutive words of *Torah* in *Hebrew* (or commentaries on the *Torah* in any language); or
- *Halacha* in any language.

Sheimot: Illegible

If a normal person is not able to read your handwriting, then even if you wrote holy words, *Torah*, or *halacha* , they are not considered *sheimot*.

SHEIMOT: TREATMENT

SHEIMOT: HOW TO TREAT

Sheimot: Summary of Treatment

Sheimot must be treated carefully, protected from unclean places, and buried or—in some cases—double-wrapped rather than trashed. See individual listings below for details.

SHEIMOT: HOW TO DISPOSE OF

Sheimot: Disposal

These holy writings (*tashmishei kedusha*) may not be thrown directly into the trash, but should ideally be buried with like items (*sheimot*):

- Holy writings that contain God's name.
- Parts of *Tanach* (24-book Jewish Bible).
- Explanations of the *Torah* or commandments.

However, if a printed or written page (in contrast to parchment scrolls such as *tefilin*, *Torahs*, or *mezuzas*) contains God's name plus secular content, it must be double wrapped in plastic before being thrown in the trash.

REASON It would be a disgrace to bury *Torah* words with secular content.

NOTE You may find collection boxes (marked "*sheimot/sheimos*" or "*geniza*") at a local Jewish school or *synagogue* into which you can deposit your *sheimot* items.

NOTE *Tashmishei mitzva*—items used to do a *mitzva* (such as *talit* or *tzitzit)*—must be wrapped in:

- One layer of plastic if they will be thrown away in dry trash, or
- Double layer of plastic if they will be thrown away into wet garbage.

Sheimot/Bury

Do not throw into trash, even if double wrapped:

- Handwritten scrolls of *Torah*, *tefilin*, *mezuza*.
- Printed *Torah*, *Talmud*, *siddur*, books of *halacha*, or *Torah* commentaries.

Rather, put them into a *sheimot* collection box or wrap in plastic and bury in a place where they will not be dug up. It does not need to be a cemetery.

Double Wrap and Throw into Trash

Double wrap and throw into trash:

- Newspapers and flyers that have *Torah psukim* or *Torah* commentaries and also have non-*Torah* content.

  REASON Non-*Torah* material should not be buried as *sheimot*.

- Children's school handouts with *psukim* from the *Torah* or *halachot* that also contain non-*Torah* content (if they ONLY contain words of *Torah*, they should be buried as *sheimot*).

Single Wrap and Throw into Trash

For disposal of items used for *mitzvot* (*tashmishei mitzva*), you may wrap in one layer of plastic and throw it in normal garbage:

- *Lulav*,
- *Etrog*, or
- *Talit*/*tzitzit* (but NOT *tefilin*!)

HOLY BOOKS

HOLY BOOKS: DEFINITION

Holy Books: Definition

A Jewish holy book is any book that contains:

- God's name in any language, not just *Hebrew*,
- Any lines (*psukim*) of *Torah*,
- *Midrashim*,
- *Halacha* in any language, or
- *Mishna/Talmud* and their commentaries.

HOLY BOOKS: PLACEMENT

HOLY BOOKS: ORIENTATION

Holy Books: Correct Orientation

Put holy books in their correct location:

- Remove a holy book from an inappropriate place to a place suitable for holy books.
- Turn right-side up a holy book that is upside down or backside up.
- Do not use any holy book--even of lower priority or holiness--to prop up or raise the top of a non-holy or less-holy book (for example, so you can read it better).

REASON It is disrespectful to use a holy book as a book holder.

HOLY BOOKS: ON SEAT

Holy Book: Raise from Seat

You may place a *siddur* or *chumash* flat on chair seat or bench on which no one is sitting, but it is an act of piety to stand it up on its edge.
To sit on a bench or other seat where a holy book rests, raise the book up at least a little; a single piece of paper is sufficient elevation.

NOTE If you are sitting on a bench and someone puts a holy book on the bench, you must stand up or raise the book off the bench. You may not stand a *siddur*, *chumash*, or other holy book up on its edge on a bench or pew in order to be allowed to sit on that bench.

HOLY BOOKS: STACKING ORDER

Holy Books: Stacking Order

When piling up several holy books, put them in this order (top to bottom):

- *Torah* (Jewish Bible)
- *Nach*/Prophets
- *Talmud*, *siddur*, and any other holy books.

Holy Books: Carrying Order

When carrying holy books, you may put a *Torah* or *Talmud* below other books to prevent their falling or to make them easier to carry. For piling books on top of each other, see Holy Books: Stacking Order.

HOLY BOOKS: MODEST DRESS

Holy Books: Being Undressed

You should not be naked or have intercourse in a room with holy books, unless:

1. There is a wall or divider between yourself and the holy books within 10.5 inches of the ground and at least 40 inches tall (or as tall as needed to block a line of sight between yourself and the book), or
2. You cover the books with two layers of paper or some other material.

REASON It is not proper respect to the holy books.

NOTE This is true even if the couple is covered, as is the proper practice, and even if they are more than 4 *amot*/7 feet away, since the entire room is considered to be one domain.

HOLY BOOKS: DISPOSAL

Holy Books: Disposal

For holy book disposal, see *Sheimot*: Disposal**.**

MEZUZA

INTRODUCTION TO MEZUZA

Introduction to Mezuza

A *mezuza* (pl., *mezuzot*) is a small, *sofer*-inscribed parchment scroll containing the two *Torah* paragraphs commanding us to put *mezuzot* on our doorposts and gates: *Deuteronomy*/*Devarim* 6:4-9 and 11:13-21 (these are the first two paragraphs of the *shema* prayer.) Each doorway that is related to where people live must have a *mezuza*.

Mezuzot are placed on the right side of doorways as you enter in apartments, buildings, or even recreational vehicles that you rent for 30 days or more (or that you purchase/own), in which you sleep.

A *mezuza* has protective value in that it reminds us to think about God each time we walk past a doorway or gateway, and so the particular name of God written on the *mezuza* (*shin-daled-yud*) likewise can serve as an acronym for God's role as "*Shomer dirot Yisrael*"—Watcher over the dwelling places of Israel.

MEZUZA: PARTS

Mezuza: God's Name on Outside

A *mezuza* scroll should be rolled from left to right so that God's name appears on the outside.

Mezuza: Covers

Mezuzot are not required by *halacha* to have covers (*sheitels*). Covers are only for decorating and protecting the parchment; their use is recommended in the *Shulchan Aruch*.

NOTE Covers may be necessary to protect the *mezuzot* where the weather is humid, hot, or rainy.

MEZUZA: WHICH BUILDINGS REQUIRE

Mezuza: Where People Live

Only buildings in which people live need a *mezuza*, so you do not need to put them on offices, *synagogues*, or stores (unless people also live there). No *mezuza* is needed on an *eruv*.

Mezuza: Buildings Regularly Used with a Person's Home

Mezuzot must be placed on any buildings used with a person's home.

EXAMPLES

- A barn with animals that is near a house, if you use their *milk* or meat for food.
- A coop with birds that is near a house if you eat their meat or eggs.

- A shed for firewood.

NOTE There may be exceptions due to size or other factors--consult a *rabbi*.

NOTE A structure that only stores items not used regularly, such as a shed for storing a *sukka*--even if attached to a house--does not need a *mezuza*.

NOTE Do not put *mezuzas* on a *sukka* or any other temporary structure. If you have a pergola or gazebo that is at least 50 sq. ft. of area inside and that you use during much of the year, consult a *rabbi*.

Mezuza: Hotel Rooms

We do not normally affix *mezuzot* to hotel rooms, even when we would be required to (as when staying for more than 30 days).

REASON To do so might damage the hotel property.

WHAT TO DO Do not affix a *mezuza* even with long-lasting tape.

NOTE You may not affix a *mezuza* if you will not be allowed to remove it when you leave.

MEZUZA: WHICH DOORS

Mezuza: Which Doors: All Doors Except...

Each door needs a *mezuza* except for a:

- Bathroom, or a
- Room less than 50 square feet.

NOTE Do not affix a *mezuza* to a door that is sealed closed.

Mezuza: Which Doors: Balcony

Any covered balcony over 50 square feet requires a *mezuza*.

Mezuza: Which Doors: Arches

Place a *mezuza* on doors or gates, even if they have an arch on top instead of a straight lintel.

MEZUZA: PLACEMENT

Mezuza: Placement: Right Side of Doorway

Attach a *mezuza* to the right side of the doorway as you follow the main traffic through the house. If there is one continuous path to go further into the house, place all of the *mezuzot* on the right side as you go further into the house.

Mezuza: Placement: Balcony

Place a balcony door *mezuza* on the right side of the doorway as you enter the house from the balcony, if the balcony has an outside entrance. If the balcony does not have an outside entrance, put the *mezuza* on the right side as you exit the house.

NOTE If the balcony has a roof, you may be able to put it on the right side as you go out. Consult a *rabbi*.

Mezuza: Placement

***Mezuza*: Placement: Door Frame**

Place the *mezuza* outside the door but within the door frame. If not possible, you may place the *mezuza* inside the door frame.

NOTE You may recess a *mezuza* into the door frame.

NOTE If the doorframe is wider than 4” (10 cm), place the *mezuza* toward the outer edge of the frame, not

centered in the middle.

NOTE You may attach a *mezuza* to a piece of wood that extends the doorway.

***Mezuza*: Placement: Height**

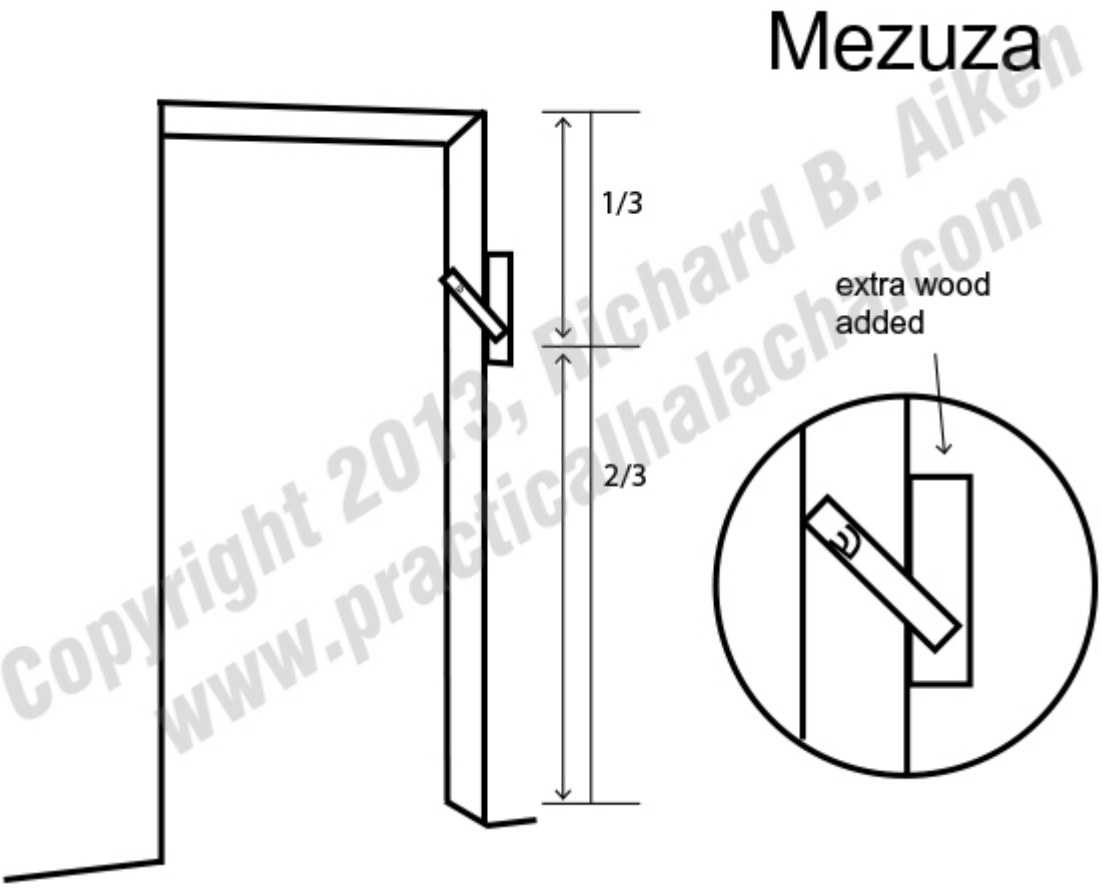
Place the *mezuza* at shoulder height for the average person. Leave at least one *tefach* (4", or 10 cm) between *mezuza* and lintel.

If possible, affix a *mezuza* just above where the top 1/3 of the doorpost meets the middle 1/3.

NOTE This rule is superseded by the rule that the *mezuza* must be near shoulder height.

***Mezuza*: Placement: Angle**

Place the *mezuza* on a 45-degree angle from the vertical, with the top of the *mezuza* toward the inside of the main room. If you cannot, any angle toward the entrance is OK.



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MEZUZA: WHEN TO AFFIX

MEZUZA: WHEN TO AFFIX IN ERETZ YISRAEL

Mezuza: When To Affix in Eretz Yisrael

In *Eretz Yisrael*, whether you buy or rent, you must affix *mezuzot* immediately upon moving in.

MEZUZA: WHEN TO AFFIX OUTSIDE ERETZ YISRAEL

Mezuza: When To Affix Outside Eretz Yisrael: Buying (or Renting for More Than 30 Days)

Outside of *Eretz Yisrael*, you must affix a *mezuza* immediately once you begin "living" in your house--determined by the first time you eat or sleep in the house. If you buy a house but do not move in immediately (for any reason--repairs, you are still in your previous house, etc.), you should affix a *mezuza* but do not say the blessing. Then, when you do move in, remove the *mezuza* and re-affix it and say the blessing.

You need not affix a *mezuza* if you will be renting for less than 30 days, and you may delay putting up a *mezuza* until the 30th day if you will be renting longer than that. Here are the types of rentals that will require a *mezuza* by the 30th day:

- A home,
- An apartment, or
- Other accommodation--such as a camper, trailer, recreational vehicle (RV), etc.--in which you will live at some time.

NOTE If you are renting a vehicle/trailer that you will live in but might not keep it for 30 days, put on *mezuzas* as needed immediately but do not say a blessing (this is the same for in *Eretz Yisrael* or outside). Then, even if you keep it for more than 30 days, do not do anything additional (don't remove them and replace; don't say a blessing).



If you live in a vehicle for more than 30 days, you must affix mezuzas next to each of the doors.

Mezuza: When To Affix Outside Eretz Yisrael: Renting for Fewer Than 30 Days

Outside of *Eretz Yisrael*, you do not need to affix a *mezuza* (even without a blessing) to an apartment, house, or other accommodation that you rent for less than 30 days.

Determining 30-Day *Mezuza*-Affixing Period

If you are living in a rented house, apartment, RV, etc., and remove all of your possessions used for living (such as clothing, bedding, and toiletries) at some time before 30 days have elapsed, the place is not considered to be your domicile. You restart counting the 30 days from the day you move the personal items back inside.

SITUATION You rent a vehicle for 30 or more days but live and sleep there only five days a week (and remove all your personal items to spend Fridays and Shabbats with a family or in a hotel)

WHAT TO DO You will not be considered to be living there; you must affix a *mezuza* only if you leave some personal effects in the vehicle continuously for at least 30 days.

MEZUZA: BLESSING

Mezuza: Blessing

When you attach a *mezuza* to the correct doorpost, affix it at the bottom first and then say the blessing *likbo'a mezuza*.

NOTE Do not say the blessing if there is no door in the doorway

Mezuza: Blessing If Mezuza Falls Off

Say the blessing again when you replace a *mezuza* that falls off.

Mezuza: Blessing If You Removed Mezuza

Don't say a new blessing when you replace a *mezuza* that you took off (for example, to have it checked).

MEZUZA: KISSING

Mezuza: Kissing: Custom

Kissing a *mezuza* (and *tefilin)* is not *halacha* but rather a custom to show our love for those *mitzvot*.

Mezuza: Kissing: Which To Kiss

If your custom is to kiss *mezuzot*, only kiss them when entering or leaving a house. Do not kiss the *mezuzot* on the interior room doorways.

MEZUZA: CHECKING

Mezuza: Checking: How Often

Have your *mezuzot* checked twice every seven years.

MEZUZA: BEDROOM

Mezuza: Bedroom

You may not be naked or have intercourse in a room with a *mezuza* inside the room, unless:

1. There is a wall or divider within 10.5 inches of the ground and at least 40 inches tall between yourself and the *mezuza*, or
2. The *mezuza* is covered by two layers (*kis b'toch kis*) of paper or other material.

NOTE This is true even if the couple is covered, as is the proper practice, and even if they are more than 4 *amot*/7 feet away, since the entire room is considered to be one domain.

MEZUZA: REMOVAL

Mezuza: Removal: Do Not Remove When...

Do not remove your *mezuzot* if you:

- Leave your house, even for a long period such as a year.
- Sell your house to a Jew.

TEFILIN

TEFILIN: MITZVA

Tefilin: Torah Mitzva

Have in mind that you are doing a *mitzva* of the *Torah* while putting on *tefilin*.

TEFILIN: HOLINESS

TEFILIN: HOLINESS: TEFILIN STRAPS

When Tefilin Straps Become Holy

The straps on *tefilin* become holy objects once they have been used.

TEFILIN: HOLINESS: TEFILIN BOXES

Tefilin: Holiness: Head and Arm Tefilin Boxes

The box for holding the head *tefila* (*tefila shel rosh*) has a higher level of holiness than does the box for holding the arm *tefila* (*tefila shel yad*). You may not intentionally switch the boxes.

Tefilin: Holiness: Switching Boxes by Mistake

If you inadvertently put the arm *tefila* (*tefila shel yad)* into the box for the *tefila shel rosh*, take it out and put it into its proper box.

TEFILIN: HOW TO PUT ON

Arm Tefila: How To Put On

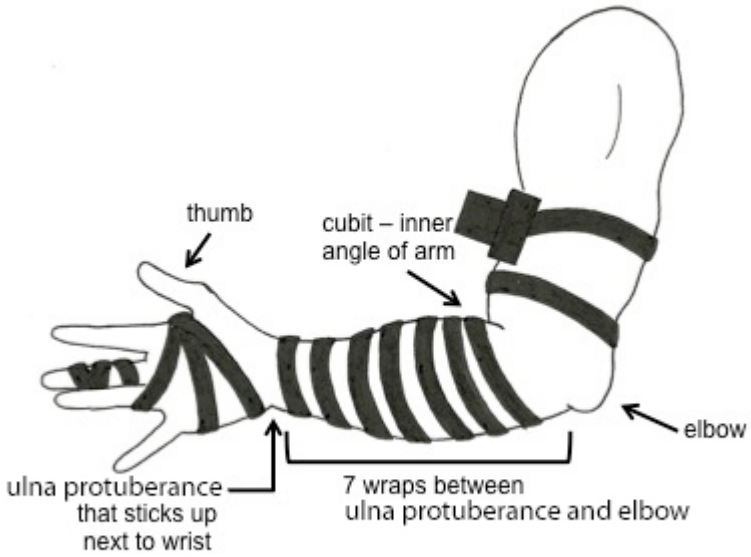
1. Place arm *tefila* box (*bayit*) on center of bicep of whichever arm you do not write with (knot on the arm *tefila* should touch the side of the box). If you are ambidextrous, put the *tefila* on your left arm.
2. Say the first blessing, "*lehaniach tefilin.*"
3. Tighten the strap.
4. Wrap the strap around your arm seven times between your cubit (inside of your arm, opposite the elbow) and your wrist.

   NOTE If you wrap more times, it is OK.

   NOTE You may wrap the *tefilin* strap over a wristwatch or put a watch on top of the *tefilin* strap.

   NOTE *Tefilin* straps should not overlap with each other and should not be wrapped on top of the ulna protuberance, but if they do--it is permitted.

5. Wrap the excess around the palm of your hand (tuck in the end to keep it tight and out of the way).



Tefilin

Head Tefila: How To Put On

1. Place the *tefila* on your head tightly enough so it does not slip off under normal motion.
2. Center the head *tefila* box on your forehead (as it appears to an average person. There is no need to look in a mirror.)
3. Place the head *tefila* box with its front edge above your hairline (or where your hairline was when you were 13!), not further back than half-way on your skull from front to back.
4. Ideally, place the knot at the back on your occipital bone (base of your skull), but you may place it lower as long as it is still on top of your hair.
5. Say the second blessing, *al mitzvat tefilin*.
6. Tighten the *tefila* on your head and say, *Baruch shem kevod malchuto l'olam va'ed*

REASON "*Al mitzvat tefilin*" is a questionable blessing (*safek bracha*).
NOTE *Tefilin* head straps should reach at least to your navel (left strap) and *mila* (right strap).

Arm Tefila: How To Finish

- Unwrap the excess strap from your palm and wrap it three times around your middle finger while saying the three "*v'eirastich li*" phrases, one for each wrap.
- Wrap the strap around your palm in the shape of the *Hebrew* letter "*shin.*"
- Wrap the excess around your palm and tuck in the end of the strap to keep it tight and out of your way.

NOTE You may not say *amen* or reply to *kaddish* or *kedusha* if you have said the blessing on your arm *tefila* but have not yet said the blessing on your head *tefila*.

Tefilin: Left-Handed Men

Left-handed men must put *tefilin* on their right arm.

Tefilin: Broken Arm

Even with a broken arm, do not switch the arm on which you wrap your *tefilin*.

NOTE If your (normally) weaker arm becomes permanently stronger than the other arm, switch to wearing *tefilin* on the newly weaker arm.

TEFILIN: FALLEN

Tefilin: Fallen: Fast

If *tefilin* without their covers on fall onto the ground, the custom is to fast for one day. If the covers are on the *tefilin*, there is no custom to fast.

TEFILIN: ADJUSTING OR REPLACING

TEFILIN: ADJUSTING

Tefilin: Adjusting: Saying Blessing

If you adjust your *tefilin*, do not say the blessing again.

TEFILIN: REPLACING

Tefilin: Replacing: Tefilin You Had To Take Off or That Fell Off

If you take off your *tefilin* because you have to, such as to go to the bathroom, or if one or both of the *tefilin* fall or slide off your arm or head, say:

- Both blessings again when you replace the head *tefila* (*tefila shel rosh)* on your head.
- Only the first blessing when replacing the arm *tefila* (*tefila shel yad)* on your arm.
- Each blessing in its correct place if you took off both.

REASON We say the blessing again for *tefilin* that fell off because there was discontinuity in thought (*hesech da'at*) when they fell off.

NOTE If you took the *tefilin* off between *bar'chu* and the end of *amida* and replaced them without saying the blessings:

- Wait until after you have finished the *amida*, and then
- Move each of the *tefilin* slightly, first the arm *tefila* and then the head *tefila*, and
- Say the appropriate blessings.

Tefilin: Replacing: Tefilin You Took Off by Choice

If you take off your *tefilin* without being required to do so and with the intention of replacing them, do not say the blessings when you replace them on your head and arm.

NOTE If you took the *tefilin* off between *bar'chu* and the end of *amida*, see the note to *Tefilin*: Replacing: *Tefilin* You Had To Take Off or That Fell Off**.**

TEFILIN: REMOVING

Tefilin: Removing: Earliest Time

The earliest time to remove *tefilin* on normal weekdays is after saying *u'va l'tzion*.

EXCEPTION If you wear *tefilin* on *chol ha'moed*, remove them after the *amida* in *shacharit*.

TEFILIN: STORING

Tefilin: Storing: How To Put Away

Put *tefilin* into its bag so that the knot on the arm *tefila* (*tefila shel yad*") faces away from the head *tefila* (*tefila shel rosh*).

REASON So that the arm *tefila* does not abrade the head *tefila*.

NOTE This is not a *halacha*, just good advice.

TEFILIN: CARE

Where Tefilin Must Be Black

Tefilin must be black as follows:

- *Tefilin* must be black on all of the exposed surfaces, but not on the bases/bottoms.
- *Tefilin* straps must be completely black on one surface.

TEFILIN: CHECKING

Tefilin: Checking: When

It is customary to check *tefilin* twice in each seven year period. *Tefilin* do not usually require checking, but you should periodically check:

- *Tefilin* of the type that can become *pasul* (due to white-washed parchment).
- *Tefilin* that are moved a lot, such as from place to place where there are large changes in temperature.
- *Tefilin* in humid climates, such as Florida.

NOTE Ask a *sofer* for advice about any of these cases.

TEFILIN: KISSING

Tefilin: Kissing

Kissing *tefilin* is not *halacha* but rather a custom to show our love for the *mitzva*.

TEFILIN: WHEN TO TOUCH

Tefilin: When To Touch: Shacharit

When praying on weekday mornings, touch and "kiss" the *tefilin* at:

- Places in the *shema* that mention *tefilin*, and
- *Potei'ach* in *ashrei*.

REASON When wearing *tefilin*, you should be constantly conscious that you are wearing them. One way of reminding ourselves that we are wearing *tefilin* is to touch them at these times.

NOTE To "kiss" *tefilin*, touch the box with one or more fingers and then kiss those fingers.

TEFILIN: ACTIVITIES WHILE WEARING

Tefilin: Activities While Wearing: Distractions

You may not do any activities while wearing *tefilin* that would distract you (*hesech da'at*) from remembering that you are wearing *tefilin*.

Tefilin: Activities While Wearing: Eating

You may eat a snack while wearing *tefilin*, but you may not eat a full meal (with bread).

TEFILIN: ROSH CHODESH AND CHOL HAMOED

TEFILIN: ROSH CHODESH

Tefilin: Removing before Rosh Chodesh Musaf

Remove *tefilin* before *musaf* on *Rosh Chodesh.*

TEFILIN: CHOL HAMOED

Tefilin: Chol HaMoed: Remove before Hallel

Remove *tefilin* before *hallel* on *chol ha'moed.*

EXCEPTION On *chol ha'moed Pesach*, on the day when *tefilin* are read about (*kadeish li*…), many people keep *tefilin* on until after the *Torah* has been read.

Tefilin: Chol HaMoed: In Eretz Yisrael

If you move to *Eretz Yisrael* (where no one wears*tefilin* on *chol ha'moed*) to live there permanently, do not continue to wear *tefilin* on *chol ha'moed* (if that was your custom).
If you are only visiting *Eretz Yisrael* but not living there permanently, follow your custom.

SITUATION Your custom is to wear *tefilin* on *chol ha'moed*, You are in Israel during chol ha'moed.

WHAT TO DO You still put on *tefilin*, but only in private, not in public.

Tefilin: Chol HaMoed: Blessing

If you wear *tefilin* on *chol ha'moed* (German and Lithuanian customs), do as follows:

- Jews of German descent: Say the *tefilin* blessings, and
- Jews of Lithuanian descent: Omit the *tefilin* blessings.

TORAH SCROLL (SEFER TORAH)

TORAH SCROLL: TOUCHING

Torah Scroll: Touching

Don't directly touch the parchment of a *Torah* scroll with your hand or other part of your body, unless there is no other way to handle the scroll.

TORAH SCROLL: STANDING

Torah Scroll: Standing

Stand when a *Torah* is being moved.

NOTE When the ark is open, you do not need to stand if the *Torah* or *Torahs* are stationary, but the custom is to stand anyway.

TORAH SCROLL: LIFTING

To Lift Up the Torah

To lift up the *Torah:*

- Grip the handles close to the plate at the top of the lower handles.

- Roll the *Torah* so that three columns are exposed and one of the seams is between the two rollers (this is a custom).
- Lever up the *Torah* (you may slide the *Torah* down the table toward yourself if that makes it easier).
- Show the *Torah* to people on your right and then on your left.

If you want to turn in a circle, turn to counter-clockwise as seen from above.

- At the end of rolling (*glila*) closed the *Torah*, there should be a seam between the two rods on which the *Torah* is rolled (such that if it were to tear, it would likely tear at the seam and no words of *Torah* would be torn).

TORAH SCROLL (SEFER TORAH): WRITING

Torah Scroll (Sefer Torah): Priority for Writing

Writing a *Torah* scroll (*sefer Torah*) is a *mitzva* but is not a priority; there are other activities that have a higher priority for Jewish observance.

NOTE The commandment that each Jew write a *sefer Torah* is not fulfilled by paying someone else to write a few letters of the *sefer Torah* for you.

NOTE If you hire someone to write the entire *sefer Torah* for you, that fulfills your requirement.

SOFER

Sofer: Woman

A woman may not be a *sofer*. Even though women are obligated in the commandments of *megila*, they may not be *sofrot* for *megilot* nor for the Prophets (*nevi'im)* section of the *Torah*.

Sofer: Non-Observant Jew

A non-*shomer Shabbat* Jew may not be a *sofer*.

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