

ב"ה

# Tefillin

JEWISH WRAP





## Black Leather Boxes

A mystery first spoken under the blazing sun of ancient Egypt, transmitted to earth by a Higher Wisdom at Sinai.

An enigma among human rituals—black leather boxes containing parchment scrolls. Scrolls inscribed in meticulous accordance to the criterion of an ageless scribal art—yet never to be read, only to be worn by every male.

No parallel can be found among any other people. No other culture ever undertook to imitate or borrow such an other-worldly rite.

From Sinai to Jerusalem, Babylon to Masada, Auschwitz to Manhattan, through fire, sword, forced labor and affluence—we carried it to this day, guarding the chain of transmission with our very lives.

Yet its mystery remains unraveled. The mystery we call “tefillin”.



## Hi-tech Connectivity

This was back in the early sixties, when the first mainframe computers were being introduced into business. Professor Abraham Polichenco, a pioneer of computer technology, visited the Lubavitcher Rebbe and posed him a question:

“I know that everything that exists in the world, even something that we discover later in history, has its source somewhere in the Torah. So, where are computers in the Torah?”

Without hesitation, the Rebbe answered, “Tefillin.” The professor was perplexed.

“What’s new about a computer?” the Rebbe continued.

“You walk into a room and you see many familiar machines: a typewriter, a large tape recorder, a television set, a hole puncher, a calculator. What is new?

“But under the floor, cables connect all these machines so they work as one.”

The professor nodded enthusiastically. He hadn’t realized it before, but yes, this is all that a computer is: A synthesis of media and processing devices.

“Now look at your own self. You have a brain. It is in one world. Your heart is in another. And your hands



often end up involved in something completely foreign to both of them. Three diverse machines.

“So you put on tefillin. First thing in the day, you connect your head, your heart and your hand with these leather cables—all to work as one with one intent. And then when you go out to meet the world, all your actions find harmony in a single coordinated purpose.”

*Psst!*

### Wanna hear a little KABBALA?

Kabbala is an esoteric wisdom that explains the secrets of the cosmos and stuff Jewish people do. Like tefillin.

According to Kabbala, the world is projected into being by an infinite light focused through ten harmonious *sefiros*—something like a laser show. But at the time of creation, only seven of the sefirot descended within seven days and generated our world. The first three, those of Mind, stayed up there, sort of out of the picture.

That’s why, to this day, people’s bodies are generally not in synch with their minds. Neither are their hearts, or their actions. Actually, nothing’s much in synch with anything. It all goes back to that first Big Bang of light.

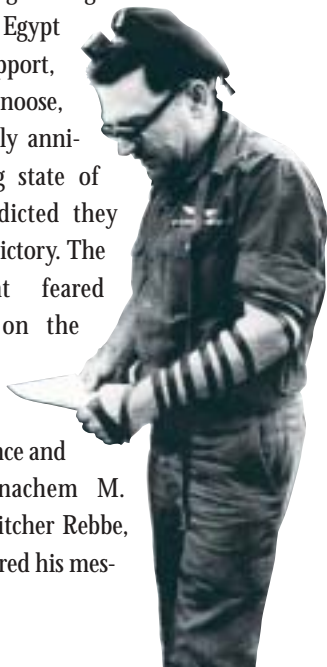


Tefillin is all about healing that rift. You do your part, connecting your mind and heart with these leather straps and black boxes with scrolls inside—and the effect reverberates throughout the cosmos. Heaven connects to earth, spiritual to physical, Creator to creation—everything starts getting into harmony with its essence and inner purpose. Hey, with gear like this, who needs light sabers?

## Tefillin Reborn

In June of 1967, the Jewish nation was again in dire danger. The neighboring Arab states, led by Egypt and with Soviet support, were tightening the noose, threatening to utterly annihilate the fledgling state of Israel. Pundits predicted they would have an easy victory. The Israeli government feared another holocaust on the horizon.

One Jewish leader stood up with confidence and strength. Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, the Lubavitcher Rebbe, spoke publicly and ensured his mes-



sage would be transmitted to Israel: G-d would make great miracles for His people and protect them. In the merit of tefillin, the enemy would turn in fear and flee.

Tefillin observance at the time was at an all-time low. Rituals had fallen out of fashion with the climate of conformity that pervaded the Cold War era. But now began an urgent campaign for Jews everywhere to wrap tefillin. Business men rolled up their sleeves on the street, students on campus, and of course, soldiers in the Israeli army.

The rest is history: The enemy quickly scattered in retreat and surrendered to a ceasefire after only six days of battle. Jewish pride took off like a rocket and a renaissance of Torah Judaism ensued in Israel, in the West and even in Russia.

Today, Jews of all walks of life can be found wrapping tefillin every morning—some for an entire hour of prayers, some for only the five minutes it takes to get them on, say the Shma and take them off again. After all, that five minutes may be just what it takes to make a whole new world.



# Tefillin in Seven

(Easier than you thought, right?)

1. You got two black leather boxes with straps in that bag. One is for the arm, the other for the head. Get out the arm one.



2. Now you're thinking, "I got two arms here. Which one do I put it on?" So it goes on the weaker arm. Meaning, righties do the left arm, lefties do the right arm. Now roll up your sleeve so that nothing is going to intervene between that leather and your skin. Get that black box up on your biceps, right across from your heart, with the strap part closest to your shoulder. Hold tight. If anyone asks you what you're doing, tell them it's a Jewish blood pressure test.



3. Say this:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו,  
וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַנִּיחַ תְּפִלִּין.

*Here's how it sounds:*

**Baruch Atah Ado-nai E-loheinu Melech ha'olam, asher kideshanu bemitzvosav, vetzivanu lehaniach Tefillin.**

*Here's what it means:*

**Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments, and commanded us to put on Tefillin.**



**4.** Focus on what you're doing. You can't talk. You can't even wink. Just tighten the strap around your arm, mindful that the tefillin knot stays in direct contact with the box. Continue to wrap: two more times over the strap-socket of the black box and around the bicep, then seven times around your arm and once around your palm. Leave the remainder of the strap loose.



**5.** Next, get out those head tefillin. You got it—they go on your head. Actually, just above your forehead. Make sure that leather box is on the right channel—smack above the point that's right between your eyes. Secure it by placing the knot at the bottom of the back of the head. Hey, and don't let those leather straps get turned inside out! You want a clear signal, right?



*Say this:*

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו,  
עַל מִצְוַת הַתְּפִילִין.

*Here's how it sounds:*

**Baruch Atah Ado-nai E-loheinu Melech ha'olam, asher kideshanu bemitzvosav, vetzivanu al mitzvas Tefillin.**

*Here's what it means:*

**Blessed are you, L-rd our G-d, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments, and commanded us concerning the mitzvah of Tefillin.**

6. Now back to your hand. Wrap the remaining leather three times around your middle finger. Like this: Once around the base, then once just above the first joint, then one more time around the base. You've got some strap left over, so wrap it around your palm and tuck in the tail end.



7. This is where you say the Shema Yisrael meditation, as printed here.

הַרִינִי מִקְּבֵל עָלַי מִצְוֹת עֲשֵׂה שֶׁל וְאַהֲבַת לְרַעְךָ כְּמוֹךָ:

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, יְיָ אֶחָד:

כְּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מְלְכוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד:

וְאַהֲבַת אֵת יְיָ אֱלֹהֶיךָ, בְּכָל-לְבָבְךָ וּבְכָל-נַפְשְׁךָ

וּבְכָל-מְאֹדְךָ: וְהָיוּ הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה, אֲשֶׁר

אָנֹכִי מְצַוְּךָ הַיּוֹם, עַל-לְבָבְךָ: וְשָׁנַנְתָּם לְבִנְיָךְ וּדְבַרְתָּ

בָּם, בְּשִׁבְתְּךָ בְּבֵיתְךָ וּבְלִכְתְּךָ בַּדֶּרֶךְ וּבְשֹׁכְבְּךָ

וּבְקוּמְךָ: וּקְשַׁרְתָּם לְאוֹת עַל-יָדְךָ, וְהָיוּ לְטַטְפֹּת בֵּין

עֵינֶיךָ: וּכְתַבְתָּם עַל-מְזוֹת בֵּיתְךָ וּבְשַׁעְרֶיךָ:

אֵךְ צְדִיקִים יִדְּוּ לְשִׁמְךָ יִשְׁבוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת-פְּנֶיךָ:

*This is what it means (Say this if you don't understand Hebrew):*

I hereby take upon myself to fulfill the mitzvah, "Love your fellowman as yourself."

**HEAR, O ISRAEL, THE LORD IS OUR GOD,  
THE LORD IS ONE.**

– *Blessed be the name of the glory of his kingdom forever and ever* –

**You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your might. And these words which I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them thoroughly to your children, and you shall speak of them when you sit in your house and when you walk on the road, when you lie down and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign upon your arm, and they shall be for a reminder between you eyes. And you shall write them upon the gateposts of your house and upon your gates.**

Indeed, the righteous will extol Your Name; the upright will dwell in Your presence.

*This is how it sounds (Say this if you don't read Hebrew):*

Hareini mekabel alai mitzvas aseil shel "v'ahavta lere'acha kamocho."

**SHEMA YISRAEL ADO-NAI E-LOHEINU  
ADO-NAI ECHAD.**

– *Baruch sheim kevod malchuso l'olam va'ed.* –

**V'ahavta eis Ado-nai E-lohecha, bechal levavecha, uvechal nafshecha, uvechal me'odecha. Vehayu hadevarim ha'eileh, asher Anochi metza-v'cha hayom, al levavecha. Veshinantam levanecha vedibarta bam, beshiv'techa beveisecha uvelech'techa vaderech, uveshach'becha uvekumecha. Ukeshartam le'os al yadecha, vehayu letotafos beinecha. Uchesavtam al mezuzos beisecha, uvishe'arecha.**

Ach tzadikim yodu lishmecha yaishvu yesharim es panecha.

## Who does this?

Every Jewish male, from the age of Bar Mitzvah (13) and up.

## When am I supposed to do it?

Every day except Shabbos and Yom Tov. (Preferably in the morning; but you've got a grace period until sunset.)

## Where do I get tefillin?

Your local Chabad rabbi will be glad to help you get the real thing at a reasonable cost.

### YOUR CHABAD NAME

Your Street • Your Address

Your phone number

