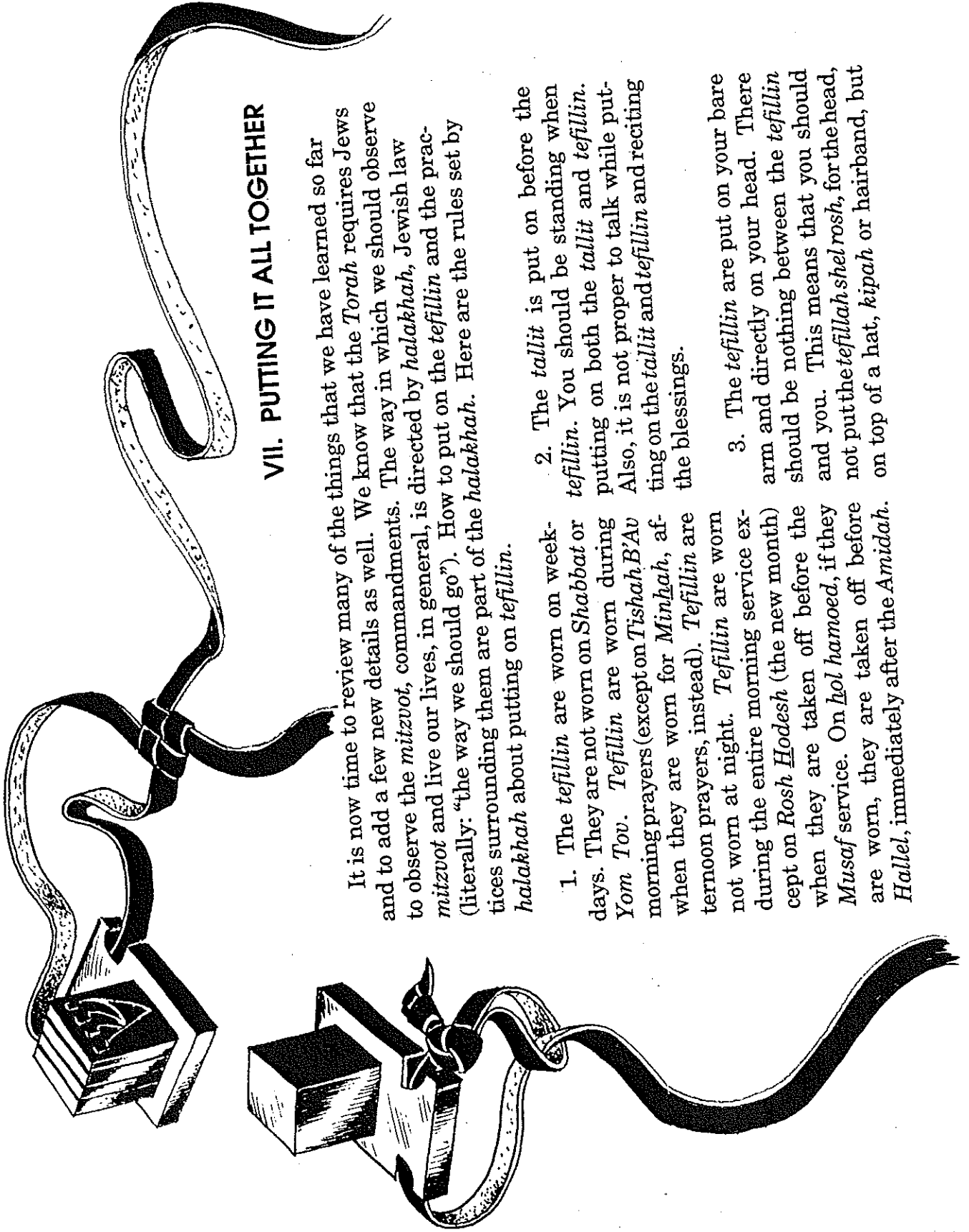


VII. PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

It is now time to review many of the things that we have learned so far and to add a few new details as well. We know that the *Torah* requires Jews to observe the *mitzvot*, commandments. The way in which we should observe *mitzvot* and live our lives, in general, is directed by *halakkah*, Jewish law (literally: "the way we should go"). How to put on the *tefillin* and the practices surrounding them are part of the *halakkah*. Here are the rules set by *halakkah* about putting on *tefillin*.

1. The *tefillin* are worn on weekdays. They are not worn on *Shabbat* or *Yom Tov*. *Tefillin* are worn during morning prayers (except on *Tishah B'Av* when they are worn for *Minhah*, afternoon prayers, instead). *Tefillin* are not worn at night. *Tefillin* are worn during the entire morning service except on *Rosh Hodesh* (the new month) when they are taken off before the *Musaf* service. On *hol hamoed*, if they are worn, they are taken off before *Hallel*, immediately after the *Amidah*.
2. The *tallit* is put on before the *tefillin*. You should be standing when putting on both the *tallit* and *tefillin*. Also, it is not proper to talk while putting on the *tallit* and *tefillin* and reciting the blessings.
3. The *tefillin* are put on your bare arm and directly on your head. There should be nothing between the *tefillin* and you. This means that you should not put the *tefillah shel rosh*, for the head, on top of a hat, *kipah* or hairband, but



around it or under it. The *tefillah* should make direct contact with your head. The *tefillah shel yad*, for the hand, goes directly on the skin of your arm and hand. This means that you should remove watches, rings, bracelets, etc., on the arm that you use for the *tefillin*. If you are wearing a long-sleeved garment, roll up the sleeve before putting on your *tefillin*. If you want, you may roll the sleeve back down over the *tefillin* after they are on. You may wear a jacket over the *tefillin* as well.

d) Take out the *tefillah shel rosh*, unwrap it carefully, take off the cover, kiss it and then put it on your head. Be sure that the knot is at the base of your skull and the *tefillah* is centered between your eyes near the point where your head and forehead come together, just at the hairline.

e) Recite the second blessing and "barukh shem" once the *shel rosh* is firmly in place and you have put your *kipah* back on over the head straps.

4. Now you are ready to put on the *tefillin*. We outlined the procedure in Chapter VI. To review:

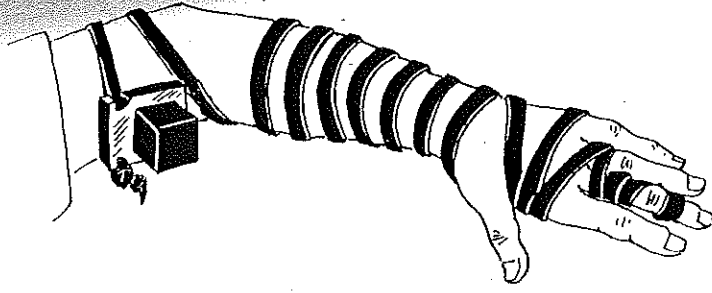
f) Wrap the leftover strap from the *shel yad* around your middle finger, recite the three lines from Hosea. Tuck any excess strap under the strap on the palm of your hand in order to keep the wrappings from unwrapping.

a) Take out the *tefillah shel yad*, unwrap it carefully, take off the cover, kiss the *tefillah* and slip your arm into the loop until it is on the biceps of your left arm (right arm for "lefties").

5. When wearing *tefillin* you should be constantly aware of their importance and holiness. Therefore you should conduct yourself accordingly at all times when you are wearing them!

b) Recite the first blessing just before tightening the *tefillah*.

c) Wrap the strap of the *tefillah shel yad* once around your upper arm



Askenazic

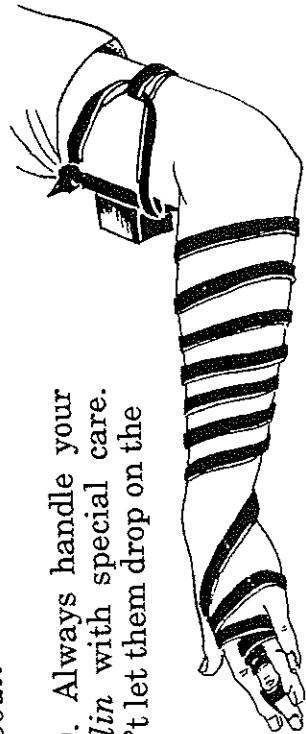
take them out in the correct order the next time you use them. Now, unwrap the straps from your arm, kiss the *tefillah*, place the cover on it, and carefully wrap the strap around the *ma'abarta*. Place the *shel yad* on the left side of the *tefillin* bag.

8. After you have removed, wrapped and put your *tefillin* back in their proper place, remove and neatly fold your *tallit*. Place it in the special bag you have for it. If you keep your *tefillin* bag inside your *tallit* bag, be sure to take it out on Friday afternoon before *Shabbat*, if you intend to use that same *tallit* for *Shabbat* prayers. Since we don't use the *tefillin* on *Shabbat* it is our practice not to touch them on *Shabbat*.

9. Always handle your *tefillin* with special care. Don't let them drop on the

6. If you should have to go out to the bathroom during services, you should take off your *tallit* and *tefillin* before leaving the room. When you come back, put them back on just as you did before, but do not recite the blessing again.

7. At the end of services, when it is time to take off the *tefillin*, you should still remember to keep their holiness in mind. You remain standing, and take them off in the reverse order of how you put them on. Again, you should not talk with your neighbors while doing this. Unwrap your hand first. Then remove the *tefillah shel rosh*, kiss it, replace the cover and wrap the straps around the *ma'abarta*, base, very neatly. Place the *shel rosh* on the right side of the *tefillin* bag. Putting each part of the *tefillin* in a certain place every time makes it easier to

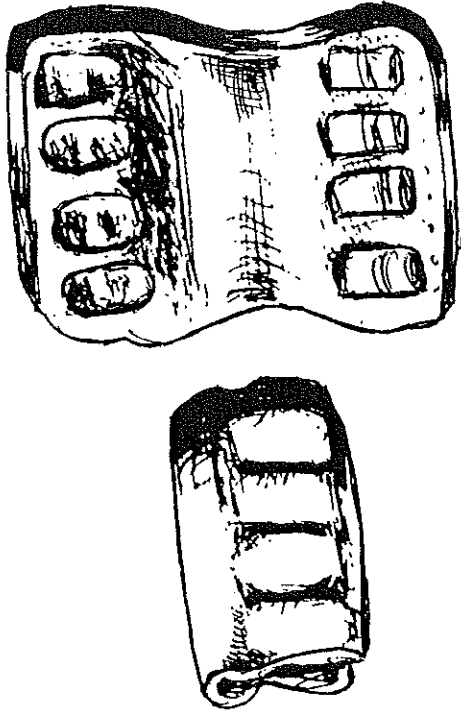


Ashkenazic

floor. Make sure that you have a place to keep them that is clean and easy to reach. Don't pile books, clothes or other things on top of them.

10. *Tefillin* can be damaged or worn out over the years. It is also possible that the ink on the scrolls may fade over time. It is a good idea to have them examined by a *sofer*, scribe, every few years. Check with your rabbi for the name of a person who is qualified to do this work.

Now you know a lot about *tefillin*. It is hoped that you have enjoyed learning about them and that you will practice using them. With knowledge and practice you have the opportunity to perform a *mitzvah*, a holy deed, which can bring you closer to God. If you want to learn more about *tefillin*, take a look at "Suggestions for Future Study" on pages 39-41. You will find a short list of books and articles that may be of interest. Good luck!



Drawing of oldest known *tefillin*, discovered by Yigal Yadin.

