

# Embodied T'fillin Practice\*

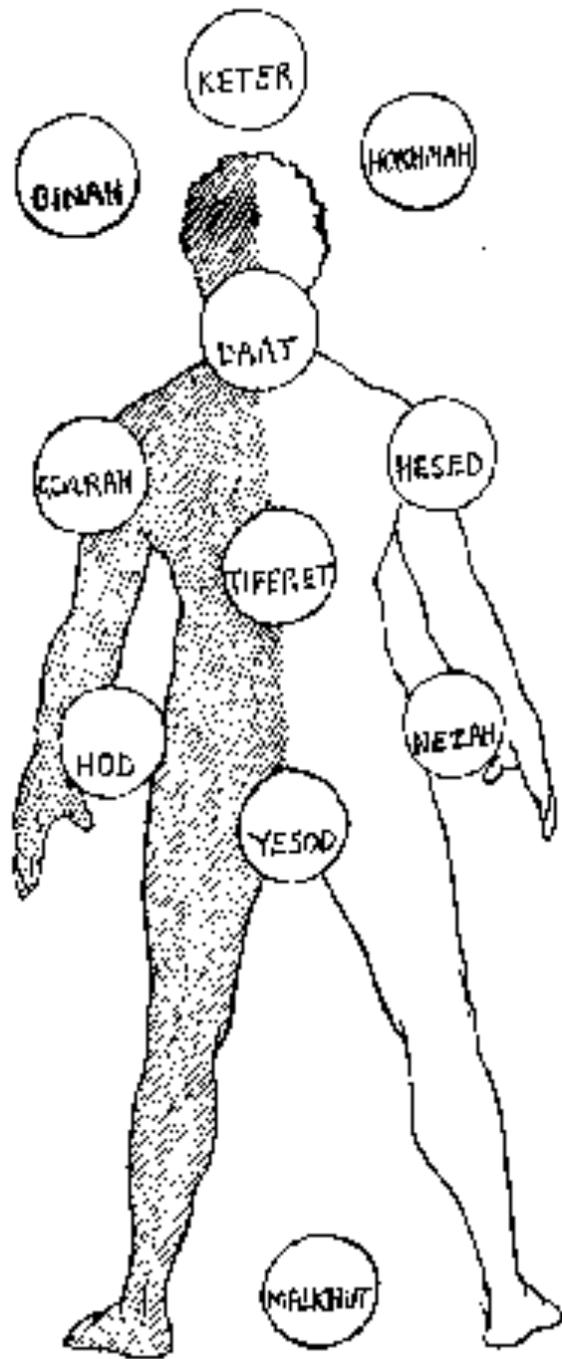
as developed by R. Diane Elliot BS

(to be done with or without *t'fillin*, for both right and left-handed wrapping)

- ⌚ Hold your *t'fillin, rosh* (head) *bayit* (box) in left hand and *yad bayit* in right hand, in front of your heart (or without *t'fillin*, left hand facing right hand, with space between, in front of heart); then touch the boxes to the right and left sides of your forehead (*khokhmah/binah*, right and left brain) as you chant *l'shem yikhud kud'sha brikh'hu ush'kinteh* (4x) *yud-hey-vav-hey* (4x) (for the sake of the unification of the Holy Blessed One and its Presence, *yud-hey-vav-hey*)
- ⌚ As you continue to chant, move the *beitim* (boxes) up and down the right and left sides of your body, head to toes and toes to head, connecting the right and left pillars of the Tree of Life (homolateral pattern: *khokhmah-khesed-netzakh & binah-gevurah-hod*)
- ⌚ Chant the unification chant again as you move the boxes first across your chest, shoulder to shoulder (*khesed* and *gevurah*) and then across your hips (*netzakh* and *hod*), connecting right and left sides of the Tree (homologous pattern)
- ⌚ Chant again as you place the *yad bayit* (right hand) on your heart center and the *rosh bayit* (left hand) on your gut center (connecting *tiferet* and *yesod/malkhut*); keep your left hand on your heart as you move your right hand holding the *rosh bayit* to your forehead, connecting your heart with your brain (*tiferet* with *khokhmah-binah-da'at*). Move both boxes up and down your body, encouraging the flow between "heart brain," "head brain," and "gut brain," unifying the central pillar of the Tree (spinal pattern).
- ⌚ Now exchange hands: take the *yad bayit* in your left hand and touch it to the *rosh bayit* in your right hand at the level of the tip of your nose (or, if doing the practice without *t'fillin*, cross your right and left wrists and turn your palms toward one another). Chant the unification intention one final time, making small figure eight's in front of your body in the horizontal plane (parallel to the floor), connecting all the *s'firot* multi-dimensionally (contralateral pattern).
- ⌚ Say the blessing for putting on the *yad t'fillin* as you place it on your arm; wind the strap seven times around your lower arm, while saying this verse from Deuteronomy, one word per winding: *v'atem (khesed) ha-d'vekim (gevurah) b'adonai (tiferet) elohey'khem (netzakh) khayyim (hod) kul'khem (yesod) ha-yom (malkhut)*: "You who bind yourselves with(in) *YHVH* your Power are totally alive/present in this very moment!")
- ⌚ Wrap the rest of the *yad* strap temporarily around your left hand to keep it out of the way, as you place the *rosh* box in the center of your forehead at the hairline, holding it with your right hand. Place the knot at the base of the occiput in back and hold it with your left hand. Say the blessing: *barukh atah Yah eloheyenu melekh ha-olam asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu al mitzvat t'fillin*.
- ⌚ Imagine/feel the connection between your cortex/forebrain and brainstem (the medulla, just above where the spinal cord flows out of the skull through the foramen magnum). Relax the medulla so it can rest in the base of your skull. Feel open pathways connecting the unconscious areas of the brainstem that integrate your breathing and primitive motor responses with the sensory integration centers (hearing/smelling/tasting/vision in the

midbrain), with the emotions and basic sense of safety (ancient mammalian forebrain), and with your centers of language, reasoning, imagination (cortex). Breathe. Touch the straps on the sides of the head and feel the integration of right and left brain through the fibers that connect the two hemispheres (corpus collosum), the integration of *khokhmah* (wisdom) and *binah* (understanding). Release your amygdala (the two centers of the brain's limbic system that signal danger, deep to your temples on the right and left sides of your head).

- ⌚ As you say *barukh shem kavod malkhuto l'olam va'ed* , followed by *umeh'khokhmat'kha el elyon, ta'atzil alai, umi-binat'kha t'vineni, uv'khas'd'kha tagdil alai, u-vig'vurat'kha tatzmit oyvai v'kamai. v'shemen ha-tov tarik al shiv'ah k'nei ha-m'norah l'hash'pi'a tuv'kha liv'ri'yotekha. poteh'akh et yadeh'kha umas'bia l'khol khai ratzon* – extend the head *t'fillin* straps down your body, touching them to whatever still needs connecting.
  - ⌚ Wind the end of the *yad* strap around your left middle finger three times (for the three patriarchs), around your palm twice more (to form a shin on the back of your left hand), and then wind the loose end around the straps on your inner palm six times (for the matriarchs).
  - ⌚ While chanting these words from Hosea (2:21-22), walk a small circle around empty space, like the *hakafot* of the bride around the groom at a wedding: *v'erastikh li l'olam (malkhut), v'erastikh li b'tzedek (yesod) uv'mishpat (hod) uv'khesed (netzakh) uv'rakhamim (tiferet), v'erastikh li b'emunah (gevurah, khesed) v'ya'dat (da'at) et (binah)Yah (khokhmah)* (I will betroth you to Me forever, and I will betroth you to Me with righteousness, impeccability, kindness and compassion. I will betroth you to Me in truth, and you will intimately know G~d.”) As you walk, hold the awareness of protecting and wedding yourself to this empty G~d-space.
  - ⌚ You are now ready to *davven*. When done *davvenen*, kneel, touch the *yad* box with your right hand, hold the *rosh bayit* in your left hand, and touch the head box to the floor or ground, making a channel of energy from your gut and heart through your brain and into the earth (or a circle of energy from earth through brain, heart, gut and back into earth—see which way feels right for you).
- \* For good diagrams of how to wind the *t'fillin* and tie the knots, as well as insights into the Biblical references, spiritual technology, and mystical significance of *t'fillin* see Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan's *Tefillin* (NCSY/Orthodox Union, Brooklyn, NY; 1975, 1986, 1999)



## Prayers for Laying T'fillin

לְשֵׁם יְחֻד קִדְשָׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא וְשְׂכִינְתָּהּ (2x) י"ה ב' ו"ה (4x)

*l'shem yikhud kud'sha b'rikh hu ush'kinteh (2x) yod-heh b' vav-heh (4x)*

For the sake of the unification of *Kudsha Brikh Hu* and its Presence: "yod-heh" with "vav-heh"

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצָוָנוּ לְהַנִּיחַ תְּפִלִּין.  
*Barukh atah HavaYah eloheynu melekh ha-olam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu l'hani'akh t'fillin.*

A Fountain of Blessing are You, *Yah* our power, sovereign through time and space, who makes us holy through spiritual imperatives, one of which is to put on *t'fillin*.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצָוָנוּ עַל מִצְוֹת תְּפִלִּין.  
*Barukh atah HavaYah eloheynu melekh ha-olam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav, v'tzivanu al mitzvat t'fillin*

A Fountain of Blessing are You, *Yah* our power, sovereign through time and space, Who makes us holy through spiritual imperatives, one of which is the *mitzvah* of *t'fillin*.

בְּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מְלָכוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֵד.

*Barukh shem kavod mal'khuto l'olam va-ed.*

A Source of blessing is G~d expressed through materiality, mind extending through time and space, and we witness.

וּמַחְכְּמַתְךָ אֵל עֲלִיוֹן, תֵּאֲצִיל עָלַי, וּמְבִינַתְךָ תְּבִינְנִי, וּבַחֲסֶדְךָ תִּגְדִּיל עָלַי, וּבְגִבּוֹרַתְךָ תִּצְמִית אוֹיְבֵי וְקָמִי. וְשִׁמּוֹן הַטּוֹב תָּרִיק עַל שִׁבְעָה קַנֵּי הַמְּנוֹרָה, לְהַשְׁפִּיעַ טוֹבְךָ לְבְרִיּוֹתֶיךָ. פּוֹתַח אֶת יָדְךָ, וּמִשְׁבִּיעַ לְכָל חַי רָצוֹן.

*umeh'khokhmat'kha el elyon, ta'atzil alai, umi-binat'kha t'vineni, uv'khas'd'kha tagdil alai, u-vig'vurat'kha tatzmit oyvai v'kamai. v'shemen ha-tov tarik al shiv'ah k'nei ha-menorah l'hash'pi'a tuv'kha liv'ri'yotekha. poteh'akh et yadeh'kha umas'bia l'khol khai ratzon.*

From Your wisdom, Supernal One, may You imbue me; from Your understanding, make me understand; with Your lovingkindness, enlarge me; with Your strength uproot all that impedes me. Pour Your good oil upon the seven arms of the *menorah*, causing Your goodness to flow to Your creatures. You open Your hand, and satisfy the desires of all that live.

וְאַרְשִׁיתִיךָ לִי לְעוֹלָם, וְאַרְשִׁיתִיךָ לִי בְצֶדֶק וּבְמִשְׁפָּט וּבְחֶסֶד וּבְרַחֲמִים;  
וְאַרְשִׁיתִיךָ לִי בְּאֱמוּנָה, וַיְדַעַתְּ אֶת יְיָ

*V'erastikh li l'olam, v'erastikh li b'tzedek uv'mishpat uv'khesed uv'rakhamim; v'erastikh li b'emunah, v'yada'at et Yah.*

I will betroth you to me forever, I will betroth you to me through righteousness and with impeccability, in lovingkindness and compassion. I will betroth you to me in truth, and you will intimately know *Yah*.