

## Q&A from the Bais HaVaad Halacha Hotline

Case Law

May 11, 2022

**Q** During Shacharis, after removing my tefillin from their plastic cases, may I prop up my siddur on the cases to daven?

**A** Tefillin, mezuzos, and sifrei Torah have *kedushah*, and their bags and cases are thus defined as *tashmishei kedushah* (accessories of holiness), which may not be used for mundane purposes. As the Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 42:3) says, “A cloth that was designated to wrap tefillin permanently and was then used to wrap tefillin even once, may not be used to wrap money.”



The Mishnah Brurah (ibid. 13) notes that not only is a mundane use forbidden, but so is a lower-level holy use, like storing a siddur in a tefillin bag, as a siddur's *kedushah* is lower than that of tefillin. Therefore, your tefillin cases, which are *tashmishei kedushah*, may not be used to prop up your siddur.

Even the cloth tefillin bag should preferably not be used to prop up a siddur. Some *poskim* (see Biur Halacha 34:4) don't consider the bag *tashmishei kedushah*, because today tefillin are placed in cases, which are then put in the bag, rather than being placed in the bag directly. Others do consider it *tashmishei kedushah* because the *retzuos*, which are not covered by cases and are directly covered by the bag, have *kedushah* (Minchas Elazar 1:27).

Such use is permitted if a *tenai* was made initially. The Rama (ibid.) writes that one can stipulate when designating a bag for tefillin that it will be used for other purposes too. By doing this, you limit the *kedushah* of the bag. (This works for the cases too.)

The above applies only to *tashmishei kedushah*, not mitzvah objects generally. Tzitzis, a lulav, a shofar, and other such objects don't have inherent *kedushah* and are called *tashmishei mitzvah*; these may be used for mundane things (O.C. 21:1). Still, one must exercise care not to degrade the mitzvah (ibid.).