

And it shall be a sign upon your arm, and an ornament between your eyes. (13:16)

The four Scriptural passages contained in the *Tefillin* are basic to Judaism. They address the concepts of the Oneness of G-d, reward and punishment, and the obligation of a Jew to observe all of the *mitzvos* of the Torah. Also contained therein is a reminder of the Exodus which catalyzed our freedom from tyranny, leading up to our acceptance of the Torah and eventual initiation as Hashem's People. Thus, wearing *Tefillin* daily is an affirmation of our belief in all of the above. A Jew who does not put on *Tefillin* is referred to as a *poshei Yisrael b'gufo*, Jewish sinner with his body, which serves as the vehicle for this transgression. One who wears *Tefillin* not only fulfills a most important *mitzvah*, but he also wraps himself in an insurance policy, which is demonstrated by the following episode.

Horav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv, zl, symbolized *ameilus baTorah*, toil in Torah, at its zenith. His brilliant encyclopedic knowledge was without peer. His mastery over Torah granted him the unique power which allowed him to have a penetrating insight into situations which would elude others. Commensurate to his great strengths was his outstanding humility. He made every effort not to call attention to himself, by constantly playing down his involvement in a specific endeavor. During the *shivah*, seven-day mourning period, following his passing, the following story came to light.

A *Kollel* fellow from Elad (city in *Eretz Yisrael* near Tel Aviv) went for an outing with his family. They all climbed into the family van and set out on their journey. Sadly, shortly after they left, they were involved in a collision with another vehicle. Everyone in his family suffered injuries – none life-threatening, but painful. Their oldest son, a *b'chor*, firstborn, who was at the time nine and a half years old, did sustain serious injuries. For the first few hours, he hovered between life and death. The doctors performed brain surgery on the child, which was partially successful. They saved his life, but they saw little hope that he would ever regain his full brain function. They felt that, to a certain extent, he had suffered irreversible brain damage. He would be mentally deficient for the rest of his life.

The father, who was miraculously the only one not to have sustained injury in the crash, was beside himself. He could not accept the surgeon's diagnosis, and he went all over *Eretz Yisrael* to various *tzaddikim*, righteous Jews, to petition their blessing for his son. One of the father's close friends was a *Tefillin*-maker and scribe. As a result of his vocation, he had opportunity to speak often with *Rav Elyashiv*. He offered to go to the *gadol hador*, preeminent Torah leader of the generation, to ask for his blessing.

The man quickly took the boy, who at the time was in bed staring out in space, to *Rav Elyashiv*. The *Rav* listened to the story and responded, "Go home and bring a pair of *Tefillin* and place them on the boy's head." The only available pair of *Tefillin* he had at home were in preparation – plain, undyed boxes that did not in any way resemble the real thing. *Rav Elyashiv* felt that *Tefillin* would

engender positive results. The man quickly picked up the *Tefillin* and brought them to the home of the young boy. Following the instructions of *Rav Elyashiv*, he put the *Tefillin* on the boy.

The surgeon walked into the room to see, to his shock, a boy in a coma wearing *Tefillin*. He thought the scribe insane, but respectfully did not raise a ruckus. He turned around and quietly left the room, thinking that this time the rabbi was totally insane.

One week later, the boy was standing on his feet. Two weeks after he had been administered the "*Tefillin* medication," the boy left the hospital on his own volition. That same day, he attended *shul*, standing next to his father, *davening*. It was as if nothing had ever happened. The surgeon now agreed that nothing short of a miracle could have affected such results.

Only a handful of people were aware of this story. That was *Rav Elyashiv*. He did not seek or want any publicity. It remained circulated only within the immediate family. The boy's father had occasion to be in Bnei Brak, so he visited **Horav Chaim Kanievsky, Shlita**. After relating the story to him, *Rav Chaim* listened and then commented, "The *Midrash* states: (Hashem says) 'I did not create a head (for no) other (reason) than to put *Tefillin* on it.'" *Rav Chaim* added, "If there are *Tefillin*, then there is a reason for a head!"

When the story was related during the *shivah*, a member of the family commented, "That was the fourth time that a person was saved through the vehicle of *Tefillin*."