

## And it shall be for you a sign on your arm and a reminder between your eyes. (13:9)

Ohr Yehudah is a city in the Tel Aviv district of Gush Dan, *Eretz Yisrael*. A member of the community was in the restaurant business. In fact, he owned all the restaurants in Ohr Yehudah. This was not because no one else was interested in competing, but rather, because he was a coarse person who did not do well with competition. Whenever someone had the “courage” to open a competing establishment, he would send his hoodlums to pay the man a visit. They subtly reminded the would-be restaurateur that there could be only one restaurant franchise in Ohr Yehudah, subject closed.

The man’s wife was on a different spiritual plane than her husband. She had a burning desire to know more about Judaism, its rituals, traditions and their observance. Thus, she attended lectures on Judaism. At a recent lecture, the *Rav* had spoken about the significance of *Tefillin* and the enormous merit accrued by one who puts them on daily. *Tefillin* altered a person’s life with the merit of eight *mitzvos* one fulfills when he wears *Tefillin*. It adds holiness to the wearer and protects him from harm. Following the lecture, the wife approached the speaker and asked him how best to encourage her husband to don *Tefillin* daily. He said that nice and easy, coaxing and explaining, was the most basic way to convince a person of his spiritual obligations. She made the attempt; she even pleaded, all to no avail. He was just not interested in putting on *Tefillin*.

The restaurateur had a daily schedule which he followed like ritual. He arose at 8:00 a.m. and, shortly thereafter, he would drive his new car to one of his restaurants, where he would eat a large breakfast. He then travelled to each one of his establishments to touch base and do paperwork. One day, he did his usual; arose at 8:00 a.m., dressed and enjoyed a cup of coffee as he read the paper. At 9:00 a.m., he left his house to drive to work. As he was about to get in his car, he heard screaming from his house. He turned around and saw his wife at the door, screaming after him. He could not hear what she was saying, so he returned home.

“I cannot live like this anymore!” she declared emphatically. “I have never asked you for anything. Now, all I am asking is that you put on *Tefillin*. Five minutes, put them on, and take them off. If you cannot do this, then our marriage is of no significance to you.” “Fine,” he answered. “I will put on *Tefillin*. If this makes you happy, I will do it.” They began to search for his *Tefillin*, which he had not worn since his *bar mitzvah*. He found them and tried to remember what he was supposed to do. His wife helped him. He recited *Krias Shema*. At the very moment that he covered his eyes and said the hallowed words, *Shema Yisrael*, they heard a loud explosion. They immediately ran to the window to discover that his brand new car had exploded and was burning fiercely. An investigation revealed that one of the would-be restaurateurs whom he did not allow to open, had hired someone to blow up his car – with him in it. Had he not taken the time that day to don *Tefillin*, he would have been in the car, and he would now be history. He was saved by the mitzvah of *Tefillin*. *Tefillin* lengthens a person’s life. This incident demonstrated this verity.

Let me add one thought. We all perform activities that add to good health and longevity, but do we continue or cut them short after the “revealed” benefit has been achieved? Certainly, the man who was saved cherished *Tefillin*, but for how long? In his case, he became fully observant. He added to his life.