

Holy Protection

On the mezuzah Hashem's name ש-ד-י is written. This is an acronym for שומרי דלתות ישראל, guarding the doors of Israel (Mishnas Chassidim, Mezuzah 3:9). Another acronym for this name is שומר דירת ישראל (Darkei Moshe, Yoreh Deah 288:3). Rava said that it is a mitzva to put the mezuzah within the tefach closest to the street. R' Chanina from Sura explained this is so that the mezuzah should guard the house (Menachos 33b. see Avoda Zara 11a.) from damaging forces (Rashi, s.v. *d'tinterei*, see the Nimukai Yosef, s.v. *d'ninterei*).

In Eretz Yisrael, there was a kindergarten where for a long time every child had lice. After checking the mezuzos, it was discovered that in one of them the word ושננתם (Devarim 6:7) was written as וכננתם (לבניך) (*kinam* is lice). Once this was fixed, the lice problem vanished.

There was a man from Boro Park who developed an appetite which couldn't be satiated. After a number of months, a routine check of the mezuzos revealed that ואכלת ואכלת was written instead of the correct ואכלת ושבעת, you will eat and be satisfied (Devarim 11:15). (See Yoreh Deah 291:1 regarding when to check mezuzos.)

In another instance, there was a person having difficulties with his washing machine. When his mezuzos were checked, a problem was found with the ב and ד of the word בדרך, which mistakenly spells בד, cloth.

Similar stories are told regarding tefillin. A person suffering from fainting spells went to visit the doctor. The doctor ran a series of tests which showed that his heart was pumping in a triple rhythm (pump-pump-pump) instead of the normal double rhythm. The resulting strain was too much for him, and caused him to faint frequently. Although the doctor was certain of the diagnosis, he didn't know what to do about the problem. A friend of the patient suggested that he get his tefillin checked because mistakes in the writing or in the construction can have

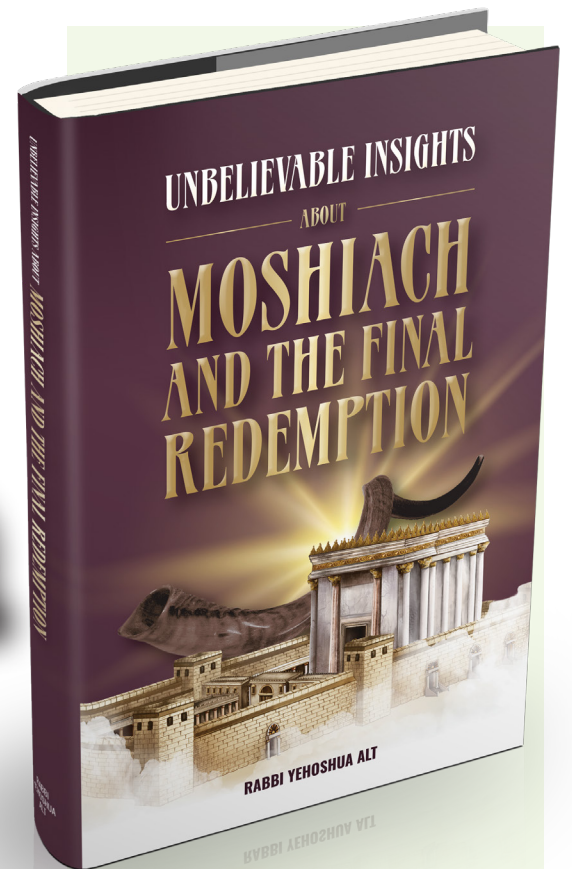
an impact on the owner. It was then discovered that לבבך לבבך (three ב instead of two!) was written לבבך (בכל). After the tefillin was fixed, the man had a complete recovery.

In the year 1996 an avreich learning in a kollel in Telz Stone had various incidents happen to his left hand. In one case, mosquitos bit only his left hand. In another episode he had a rash on his entire left arm and hand. Yet another time, while building a succa, he was banging in a nail, lost control, and hit his left muscle in the place where his tefillin were put, leaving him with a big bruise. He finally decided to get his tefillin checked. It was revealed that it was written וקשרתם על ירך, bind them upon your arm (Devarim 6:8), omitting the word לאות. Once this was corrected, these obscure occurrences stopped happening.

After Hurricane Sandy in 2012, a 49-year-old man feared that his tefillin got wet, thereby invalidating them. After the sofer checked them, he told the man that there was no water damage, but whoever wrote the tefillin had messed up on the same two letters throughout. The man expressed his frustration, saying, "I can't believe that I am 49 years old and never fulfilled the mitzva of tefillin! The sofer was shocked as he exclaimed, "You're 49? The two letters that were messed up in the tefillin were a *mem* and *tes*. These two letters have a sum of 49." The man was also astounded, and he related another shocker: "I inherited these tefillin from my father, who passed away at age 49!"

As an aside, if one checks his tefillin and finds it invalid, the result would seem to be that he didn't fulfill the mitzva of tefillin all this time, as well as saying a *bracha l'vatalah* each time. However, the sefer Rav Paalim (Orach Chaim, 4:2) cites that one receives reward on that which he sees and understands with his mind if he intended for Hashem's sake (see, however, R' Ovadia Yosef in Shu"t Yabia Omer, 7:5).

These stories are not related to scare people, but rather to help them realise some of the protection mezuzos and tefillin can serve. This can be compared to wearing a helmet, which can surely protect soldiers from bullets. This was said after the following story took place. In the summer of 1974, the Maalot High School trip to the north of Eretz Yisroel was terminated abruptly when they were attacked by Arab terrorists. Seventeen were killed. When the school's mezuzos were checked, seventeen were found to be invalid. When the total killed rose to 20, they did another check and found three more invalid.



RABBI YEHOSHUA ALT

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