

STILL WRAPPING

Lazer Raksin

This past February, just a few months ago, my wife Bella gave birth to an 8 1/2 pound baby. For reasons unknown to us, Hashem decided after a day and a half to take back the baby. My wife accepted the fact that she was the one chosen to bring down that special neshoma, which only had to be here for a day and a half. I was not so accepting. I was upset and angry with Hashem. This is how You repay me, I asked Him, for running on Mivtza Tefillin for hours and hours each week? I was devastated and hurt. I told my wife that if this is the way that Hashem

rewards us for our Mivtza Tefillin, then as of today I am abandoning the whole thing. I was doing it for a year and half at that point, had written four articles about it in the N'shei, so G-d, I said, just give me my pay for a year and a half, and now You find someone else to continue. Without missing a beat, my wife turned to me and said clearly, "Don't you have Bitachon? Hashem is testing you to see if you will keep going."

But I was still angry, and grieving for our baby. I told my wife I was failing the test, and stopping my Tefillin campaign. She looked me in the eye and said, "I'm not allowing you to stop. Just the opposite. Now is the time to go out and find new people

...A person, when reaching adulthood, must learn that whatever action he takes, or decision he makes, might have two outcomes. That is why one must think out the action or decision carefully. Once the action is done, there is no one to blame but the person who made the decision. If one succeeds congratulations are to be given. There are good outcomes and there are outcomes that are not good. *When the not good happens, one must have a fall back plan, something he would do if the original plan, the master plan, did not work.* As we learn in life, everything we do is through the Aibeshter. All that Hashem does is for the good, but He lets us make our own decisions.

Therefore there is no one to blame but ourselves. We try to be good parents... You must take a good look at your children and make an evaluation... At first glance being a parent is not such a great, difficult task. You have a child, give him room and board, play with him here and there and you're done. Sounds easy, but it's not! A parent who is really a good parent does everything he can to ensure that his child will grow into a successful adult. (Besides, of course, the Aibeshter has to give you mazel.) But it is our job to show our children how to behave and how to relate to one another and how to deal with life's good times and unfortunate times. With all my heart I feel we did show them. We took them on great family vacations, and in times of trouble and loss, we stuck together...

Children need to be spoken with periodically. Children like all people need to release what's on their chests, in order to overcome their problems. Many times children won't talk unless the parent clearly shows interest, shows that he is really there to listen and to help...

I try many times to talk with them and they do talk with me... But it's the father who they look up to, to

learn from and to follow in life.

We are so lucky that Hashem granted us our wish and with bountiful hands. I always wanted a big family. But after our slow beginning I didn't think we would have one. At that time I thought, "I will be grateful for one or two." Hashem was generous and kind to us. Now we must do our part and be good parents.

...Emotionally, our family has gone through a very hard year. It took and is still taking its toll on all of us, and there is no one to blame...

Sometimes a child is going through his own private hard time and nobody bothers to find out why... Financially, you can make a mistake and fix the mistake a hundred times. But you cannot afford to do this with your children. Please take some time to give your sons all your undivided attention. Speak to them when they need you. Sit with them, in their rooms or at the kitchen table, and look at them when they are talking to you. Listen to what they have to say, their complaints, their fears... try to help them. Not while doing other things, I've already learned that.

Life is hard, especially in golus! You must work hard to achieve anything. So what if we never make it big financially? If our children go on to be successful in all areas of their lives, that makes us successful parents! And that is something money can't buy...

Depression is an issue and doesn't do anyone any good. Just reevaluate what I said and get rid of your yetzer Hora... I'm waiting to see your smile and good results...

Bella

Excerpted from a letter Bella obm wrote to Lazer two months before she passed away.

to put on Tefillin. You will see that you will succeed." Having no choice but to listen to my wife, I had to swallow my anger at G-d and continue, and she was right: I was actually even more successful than ever before (see my fourth article, June 2003).

One regular July day, just a few weeks ago, I got a call that there was a serious accident, and I should go to the hospital. Nobody had told me yet that my wife Bella had been taken there in a medical emergency helicopter. Nobody had told me yet that both my parents-in-law were already beyond help. But still I understood that there was a crisis in the family (having no idea just how large the crisis would be) and I thought to myself, "Tomorrow I won't be able to put on Tefillin with my people." So I called all of my people, told them that there had been a serious accident, and asked them to put on Tefillin without me. The next day, my wife Bella joined her parents and our baby in Gan Eden. I called my people again, and asked them if they had read the papers. They had all heard about the horrendous tragedy, elderly parents and their daughter, a mother of seven, all killed in an accident. I told them that they were reading about my wife Bella and both my parents-in-law, Yitzchok and Rosie Scheinfeld. Naturally, the first thing they all said was, "Lazer, what I can do to help you?" I was going to be tied up all week, and I had no idea what would happen after that, so I requested from them to continue my route and put on Tefillin with my regulars. Between everybody, my route was covered in no time. And one more thing, I added. There were two who still did not put on Tefillin. They were the two toughest nuts to crack. If you could get them to do it... With a chuckle, my customers promised to try. The next day I get a phone call from them: "Mission accomplished."

Remember Abe? He's the one who threw me out of his office (N'shei article, June 2003). He became a regular now, when he has the time. I can actually approach him and ask him if he would like to put on Tefillin, without being screamed at. I get him at least twice a week. He tells me that if after three huge losses, such a monumental tragedy, I can still go on putting Tefillin with people... if I can find both the time and the energy to care... he wants to be a part of it. He doesn't understand that Bella left me no choice. She made it so very clear that I must continue.

Sometime in September of 2002, I started going into a place of business to ask the Jewish owner to put on Tefillin. (This place of business is located right near where the accident took place.) But

him to tell that fellow that in memory of my wife, I would like him to start putting on Tefillin on a regular basis. He is a regular on my route now, and by the time you read this article he will IY"H have his own Tefillin, also.

There were other people that used to give me a hard time and ever since the accident, they not only want me to come, but they quickly reached the point where they wanted to have their own pair of Tefillin, in order to put them on every day, not just when I can come.

One day I was at the mechanic. Readers who have read all of my articles know that is a place where "business" is always good. I told him that I need new customers. "Give me a minute," he said, and he walked out and then walked back in with a new customer for me. The new customer happened to be the owner of the Monticello Raceway. At first he let me put Tefillin on him, and before long he ordered his own pair. We became friendly and he even allowed me to make the Shloshim in the Raceway. Literally, hearts have melted because of this terrible and painful situation, and people are putting on Tefillin and buying their own Tefillin, just because I told them that *this* was what my wife wanted them to do. This is what she wanted *me* to do, too.

My articles were always very upbeat; I do not know how to end this article on a happy note. My seven children are motherless and the two people who would have perhaps given them a mother's love and care are gone also. When it comes to getting people to put on Tefillin, I can be quite persistent and demanding, and *I never give up*. All I can do now, and I ask you to please join me, is to demand of Hashem in the zchus of all the people putting on Tefillin l'iluy nishmas my wife Bella, it is about time for Moshiach to come already. 🕊



Bella ob"m

the owner repeatedly refused. After a few weeks of getting nowhere, I gave up on him. It was costing me precious time, and I didn't have any to waste. When I found out that the accident had happened right in front of his place, I took it as a sign from heaven that the owner should not be given up on. So I approached a friend of mine, and asked