



MEZUZAH: REACH OUT AND TOUCH SOMETHING

BY: RABBI YITZY LIEBERMAN – TORAH LINKS OF EASTERN MONMOUTH

OVERVIEW

- ... וכתבתם על מזוזות *“And write them on the doorposts of your house and upon your gates.”*
(Deuteronomy 6:9 & 11:20)
- One of the 613 commandments is to place a *mezuzah* on the entrances of our houses.
(Talmud Menachos 28a, Rambam Sefer Hamitzvos Positive #15; Chinuch 423)
- Any room, other than a bathroom, that is in excess of 28 sq. ft., has a height of at least 35 inches and is used on a regular basis, should have a *mezuzah*.
(Rama Yoreh Deah 287:2, Rambam Hilchos Mezuzah Chapter 6)
- The scriptural sections written in a *mezuzah* are the first two paragraphs of *Shema*, which speak of:
 - a. G-d's Oneness
 - b. Love of G-d
 - c. Significance of one's actions and responsibility for them
 - d. Reward and punishment.(Deuteronomy 6:4-9 & 11:13-21)
- The reason for the *mitzvah* of *mezuzah* is to serve as a constant reminder of our relationship with G-d, which helps foster our trust in Him and reminds us of His love for us. It is customary to touch and/or kiss the *mezuzah* on the way in and out of our houses daily. This helps us bear in mind that our responsibility to G-d and ourselves is not only in the public eye, but also in the privacy of our homes. It also serves as a reminder that an “essential part of doing the right thing in life regards our contacts out of the house with other people”.⁷
(Rambam Hilchos Mezuzah Chapter 6, Kitzur Shulchan Aruch, Chovos Halevavos 4:4:8)

HOW TO

- **Purchase the *mezuzah*** scroll from a reputable and conscientious scribe or Judaic store to ensure that it meets the requirements of Jewish law. Where the origin or status of the *mezuzah* is questionable, a competent scribe must check it.
(Mishna Brurah 39:19)
- **Buy an attractive *mezuzah* case.** Remember, that while the *mezuzah* case is like the body, the scroll wrapped inside is like the soul.
(Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah 286)



JUST SAY SHEMA II

From Prayer to Practice



- **Roll the *mezuzah*** tightly enough that it can fit into the case. It should be rolled from left to right, so that, upon opening, it rolls out from the beginning of the line to the end.

(Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah 285)

- **Find the right spot** on the doorpost where you would like to affix the *mezuzah*. The *mezuzah* should be placed on the doorpost that is to one's right upon entering the house/room. The *mezuzah* should be placed at the lower portion of the top third of the doorpost.

(Talmud Menachos 35a, Talmud Menachos 43b)

- **Recite the blessing** for the fastening of the *mezuzah*, immediately prior to actually affixing it in place, while holding the *mezuzah* next to the spot where you wish to place it.

(Rambam Hilchos Mezuzah Chapter 5)

ברוך אתה ה' אלקינו מלך העולם אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו לקבוע מזוזה
***Baruch Atah Ado-nai, Elo-heinu Melech Ha'Olam Asher Kidishanu Bimitzvosav, Vitzivanu
Likboa Mezuzah.***

**Blessed are you G-d, King of the World who has sanctified us with his commandments,
and has commanded us to affix a *mezuzah*.**

- **Affix the *mezuzah*** with the top tilted slightly inwards.

(Rama Yoreh Deah 289:6)

A permanent method should be used, such as screws, nails, or adhesive tape.

(Aruch Hashulchan 289:16)

- Have the ***mezuzah*** checked by a reliable scribe every three-and-a-half years.

(Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah 291:1)

MYSTICAL VIEW

G-d's name, *Shad-dai*, is written on the outside of the *mezuzah*. That name of G-d is an acronym for *shomer dalthoth Yisrael* – the protector of the doors of Israel. The *mezuzah* protects the house from various destructive forces.

(Zohar Vayikra 76:1, Tur Yoreh Deah 285)

The connection between the *mezuzah* and G-d's protection is logical; when we perform our duty of perfecting the house, in a spiritual sense, by properly affixing a *mezuzah* to the doorposts, G-d ensures that our "perfection" is not disturbed. In fact, the Hebrew letters that spell "mezuzos" – מזוזות – when rearranged spell out מות רור – remove death. Additionally, the numerical value of *mezuzah* is Ado-nai, another name of G-d, indicating the Divine protection inherent in a *mezuzah*.

There is also a spiritual benefit of the *mezuzah*. The Talmud relates: One who wears *tefillin* on his head and arm, *tzitzis* on his clothing and has a *mezuzah* on his door is guarded from sin. A fundamental tenet of Judaism is that G-d created the world for our pleasure. The greatest pleasure that can be enjoyed in this world is spiritual pleasure. When one feels a void in their spirituality, they often try to fill the void with the counterfeit pleasures of physicality and materialism. A *mezuzah* helps a person maintain their focus on the true meaning and enjoyment in life. In fact, Rambam writes that the function of *mezuzah* is to awaken a person out of his trivial pursuits.

(Rambam Hilchos Mezuzah Chapter 6)



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ONE FINAL THOUGHT

The Chofetz Chaim offers the following parable to express the ultimate benefit of the *mezuzah*:

Joe, a wealthy factory owner was approached by Stan, an old friend, seeking employment. Joe then related that he was going out of town for a few days and needed someone to oversee the factory. He explained that the factory operated in a regular routine, but (at certain times) different simple administrative tasks needed to be done, to ensure the continuance of the factory's production line. After writing out the few directions that Stan would have to follow, Joe presented him with the list and said, "Please hang this list on your door and read it on your way out every day, as the information on the list is extremely important."

When Joe returned to the factory after his brief absence, he found the factory in total disarray. Shocked, he ran over to Stan and demanded an explanation for his failure to follow the few simple directions with which he had been charged. Stan responded that he had done exactly what had been asked of him. He had hung up the paper with the directions and read them every morning on his way to work and every evening when he arrived home. In stunned disappointment, Joe explained to Stan that merely seeing the paper and reading it was of little benefit if the directions were not being followed.

Similarly, one who is meticulous about placing the *mezuzah* on his door and reading the *Shema* every morning and evening, but does not follow the instructions contained therein, is missing the point.

RESOURCES

ONLINE MEZUZAH STORES

www.judaicaplaza.com
www.tiferes.com

ANIMATED GUIDE FOR AFFIXING A MEZUZAH:

<http://www.wonderhowto.com/how-to/video/how-to-affix-a-mezuzah-to-a-doorpost-of-a-jewish-home-268155/>

Q&A FORUM ON MEZUZAH:

<http://www.mezuzah.net/sofer.html>

FURTHER READING

THE COMPLETE MEZUZAH GUIDE
RABBI MOSHE ELEFANT

MEZUZAH: A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE
YAIR HOFFMAN

TEFILLIN AND MEZUZOS
YERACHMIEL ASKOTZKY



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ADDENDUM

This is how the *mezuzah* scroll appears when written on parchment. (Some modifications have been made to this picture to protect the sanctity of G-d's name)



Hear O Israel, Hashem is our God, Hashem is One. And you will love Hashem your G-d with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might. Let these words that I command you today be on your heart. Repeat them to your children and speak of them when you are dwelling in your house and when you are traveling on the way, when you lie down and when you rise up. Bind these words as a sign on your arm [near your heart] and as tefillin [above your forehead] between your eyes. Write them on the doorposts of your house and your gates.

And if you carefully obey My commandments, which I am prescribing for you today, to love Hashem your G-d, and to serve Him with all your hearts and with all your souls, I will provide rain for your land in its season – powerful autumn rains and gentle spring rains. You may then gather in your grain, your wine, and your oil. I will also provide pasturage in your fields for your livestock. You will eat and be satisfied. Beware, however, lest your hearts be misled to turn astray and worship heavenly powers that others serve as gods and bow down to them. [To correct you] G-d will turn [His mercy into] fierce anger against you. He will close the heavens so there will be no rain, and the land will no longer yield its produce and you will quickly vanish from the good land that G-d is giving you. You should place these words of Mine on your souls. Bind them as a sign on your arms [near your hearts] and as tefillin [above your foreheads] between your eyes. You must also teach them to your children to speak of them when you are dwelling in your house and when you traveling on the way, when you lie down and when you rise up. You must also write them on the doorposts of your houses and your gates, so that your days and your children's days will be prolonged on the land that G-d swore to your ancestors to give them when heavenly days are [again revealed] on the earth.

(Hashem means "the name" and is another way of referring to G-d.)

