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**Mezuzah - מזוזה**

By Rabbi Dr. Hillel ben David (Greg Killian)

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In this [study](study.html) I would like to examine the [mitzva](cmds613.html)[[1]](#footnote-1) of mezuzah (literally *doorpost*). As we shall see, the [mitzva](cmds613.html) of mezuzah has a way to cause us to draw close to [HaShem](hashem.html), and in the process, secure His protection. Further, this [mitzva](cmds613.html) has the ability to bring us true [freedom](freedom.html), the [freedom](freedom.html) that can only be achieved by serving [HaShem](hashem.html).

**What is a mezuzah?**

A mezuzah is a small scroll inside an ornamental holder which is attached to the doorpost.

A kosher mezuzah scroll is [hand](fourteen.html)-written on genuine parchment, prepared from the skin of a kosher animal. A specially trained scribe, [known](daat.html) as a sofer, carefully writes the words using special black ink and a quill pen. The [letters](letters.html) must be written according to [halacha](walking.html), found in the [Oral Torah](orallaw.html), and every [letter](letters.html) and word must be correct. Any mistakes or missing [letters](letters.html) invalidates the entire parchment, much like a small piece of missing wire causes a radio not to function.

Though *mezuzah* refers to the actual parchment itself, *mezuzah* is colloquially used to also describe the decorative case the scroll is stored in. Unfortunately, many homes have ornate cases containing invalid scrolls, or no scroll at all! The internal depth of the [command](cmds613.html) has been stripped away, leaving nothing more than a posh exterior. Indeed, a xeroxed mezuzah is not kosher, and serves no purpose whatsoever.

Interestingly, from the [first](one.html) [time](time.html) *mezuzah* is used in the Torah, we can see that the word means *doorpost*:

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 12:7*** *They shall take some of its* [*blood*](body.html) *and place it upon the* [*two*](two.html) *mezuzoth* (plural of mezuzah) *and on the lintel…*

Yet, the piece of parchment itself along with its housing has forever been [known](daat.html) as a *mezuzah*. [Hebrew](hebrew.html) is rich enough for it to have had its own [name](name.html), but no such [name](name.html) exists. It is called a *mezuzah –* a doorpost. How strange; the parchment is the doorpost?

In reality, yes it is; the *mezuzah* itself is the [spiritual](physical.html) equivalent of the [physical](physical.html) doorpost. Just as a doorpost allows passage between public space and the private home so the mezuzah does the same. The word *mezuzah* is derived directly from the [Hebrew](hebrew.html) word *zuz* meaning *move*.

The custom of a groom carrying his bride through the doorway probably originated with the [spiritual](physical.html) importance of that portal.

The scroll contains [two](two.html) passages from the Torah: Devarim (Deuteronomy) 6:4-9 and Devarim (Deuteronomy) 11:13-21. The scroll contains the [first](one.html) [two](two.html) paragraphs of the [*shema*](shema.html) [prayer](prayer.html), declaring the oneness of [HaShem](hashem.html), and commanding us “to write [these words] on the doorpost of your house and on your gates”. The second passage [teaches](teacher.html) that [Jewish](gen-jew.html) destiny, both individually and nationally, depends upon fulfilling [HaShem](hashem.html)’s will.

On the reverse side[[2]](#footnote-2) of the mezuzah scroll is the [Hebrew](hebrew.html) [name](name.html) of [HaShem](hashem.html), *Shaddai* - שדי. This [name](name.html) is an acronym for:

**שׁ**וֹמֶר **דְ**לָתוֹת **יִ**שְׂרָאֶל

*Guardian of the Doors of Israel*.[[3]](#footnote-3) Additionally, there are often [three](three.html) words at the bottom of the backside of the scroll: כוזו במוכסז כוזו. These mysterious words, transliterated as: *Kozo bemuskaz Kozo*. These [three](three.html) words are an altered form of the phrase “[HaShem](hashem.html) Elokeynu [HaShem](hashem.html)”, which means “G-d, our Lord, G-d”. It is actually a form of Gematria (אב׳גד) where each [letter](letters.html) is “raised” to the next [letter](letters.html). Thus, an Alef becomes a Bet, and a Bet becomes Gimel, and so on. Here, the [letters](letters.html) for [HaShem](hashem.html)’s [name](name.html) yud, hey and vav, hey become caf, vav, zayin, vav (cuzu); and the [letters](letters.html) for Elokeynu (alef, lamed, heh, yud, nun, vav) become bet, mem, vav, caf, samach, zayin (bmucsz). Rabbi Moshe Isserlis quotes the *Hagahot Maimoni[[4]](#footnote-4)* as the source for this custom. It is only a custom and a mezuzah without these words is still valid.

The only kind of scroll that is written both on the inside and outside, that I am aware of, is the mezuzah.

A very significant difference between mezuzot (plural of mezuzah) and [tefillin](tefillin.html) compared to other scrolls is that the [letters](letters.html) must be written in the order in which they appear in the Torah. Every [letter](letters.html) must be written in order, so a single mistake invalidates the scroll. Unlike a [Torah scroll](letters.html) where we can remove the incorrect word and finish writing the sentence.

*Targum to* ***Tehillim (Psalms) ‎121:4-5 4.*** *Behold, He does not slumber and He will not sleep, the guardian of Israel. 5. HaShem will guard you, HaShem will overshadow you, on account of the mezuzah affixed on your right side as you enter.*

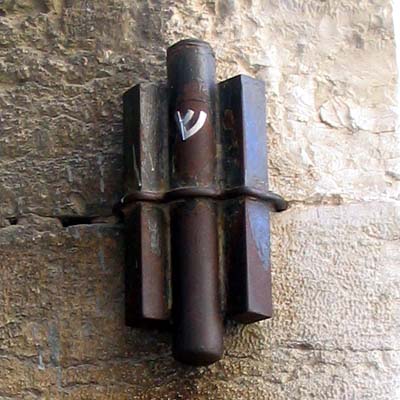
The [mitzva](cmds613.html) of mezuzah [first](one.html) became obligatory when the Children of Israel began living in houses in the promised land. As long as they were living in tents, in the wilderness, there was no requirement for mezuzah because the tents did not have doorposts.

In general, [mitzvot](cmds613.html) apply to individuals and can be conditioned by certain geographical or temporal factors. For example, a person must [eat](eating.html) [matza](chametz.html) on the 15th of [Nisan](feasts.html). The [mitzva](cmds613.html) devolves upon each person on that day. Similarly, a person must, under certain circumstances, offer a [sacrifice](korbanot.html) in the [Temple](temple.html). Though the [mitzva](cmds613.html) cannot be performed outside of the [Temple](temple.html), the [mitzva](cmds613.html) still applies to the person; the holy precinct is merely the site of the execution of the [mitzva](cmds613.html). [One](one.html) notable exception is the [mitzva](cmds613.html) of mezuza, which applies to the house. A person is not obligated to live in a house with a mezuza; rather, if a [Jew](gen-jew.html) owns a house, he or she must then [convert](aliens.html) it into a house with mezuzot. In this instance, the [mitzva](cmds613.html) which a person must perform relates directly to the house.

This [connection](connection.html) between the mezuzah and the house is reinforced by the [Talmud](orallaw.html):

***Shabbath 23b*** *R. Huna said: He who habitually practises [the lighting of] the lamp will possess scholarly sons; he who is observant of [the precept of] mezuzah will* [*merit*](merit.html) *a beautiful* [*dwelling*](dwelling.html)*; he who is observant of* [*fringes*](tzitzith.html) *will* [*merit*](merit.html) *a beautiful garment; he who is observant of the Sanctification of the Day will be privileged to fill barrels of wine.*

A mezuzah, with its scroll, is affixed to the doorpost of every room, except bathrooms and closets, of a [Jewish](gen-jew.html) home to fulfill the [mitzva](cmds613.html) (Biblical [commandment](cmds613.html)) to inscribe the words of the [Shema](shema.html) “on the doorposts of your house”.[[5]](#footnote-5)



**Mezuzah container on Jaffa gate.**

Additionally, the [mitzva](cmds613.html) of mezuzah applies also to the gates of a [city](city.html) or house if it contains doorposts and a lintel. All of the gates of [Jerusalem](city.html) have a muzuzah except the Damascus gate. That mezuzah was removed by the Arabs and has never been replaced. The mezuzot on the gates of [Jerusalem](city.html) are placed according to Sephardic tradition. The above picture shows the mezuzah on the Jaffa gate. It is worth noting that the mezuzot on the gates of [Jerusalem](city.html) are all attached according to Sefardi tradition, stright up and down. Ashkenazim have a tradition to slant the mezuzah when attaching it.

Having a mezuzah on each room means that whenever we move from [one](one.html) domain, [one](one.html) sphere of activity, to another, we must renew our consciousness of [HaShem](hashem.html)’s presence and act in a way that sanctifies His [Name](name.html).

**Shaddai - שדי**

As we mentioned earlier, on the **reverse** side of the mezuzah scroll is the [Hebrew](hebrew.html) [name](name.html) of [HaShem](hashem.html), *Shaddai* - שדי.

The root of *Shaddai is* *shadad* (שדד). *Shadad* means *to overpower* or *to destroy*. This suggests a [connection](connection.html) to what we find in sefer Revelation.

***Revelation 6:1*** *And I saw when the Lamb opened* [*one*](one.html) *of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder,* [*one*](one.html) *of the* [*four*](four.html) *beasts saying, Come and see. 2 And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.*

The word *conquer* carries the same connotation as *overpower*.

This [name](name.html), Shaddai, is an acronym for: ישראל שומר דלתות, *Guardian of the Doors of Israel*. This suggests that the Guardian of Israel guards those that observe the [mitzva](cmds613.html) of mezuzah. (Shin - ש, the [first](one.html) [letter](letters.html) of this [Name](name.html), often appears on the mezuzah case.)

The [name](name.html) שדי appears in [connection](connection.html) with [three](three.html) [mitzvot](cmds613.html): [Tefillin](tefillin.html), mezuzah, and [brit mila](circumcz.html). The [name](name.html) appears on the bayit and knots of the [tefillin](tefillin.html). This [name](name.html) is visible on the outside of the mezuza, as we saw above, and the [name](name.html) שדי was used when [HaShem](hashem.html) commanded [Avraham](avraham.html) to perform his own brit.

Nachmonides tells us that the [name](name.html) *El Shaddai* personifies [HaShem](hashem.html) as the power that bends nature to His will. This is why we see this [name](name.html) in [connection](connection.html) with the Patriarchs. [HaShem](hashem.html) changed nature to assist the Patriarchs.

Thus we learn that there is significant benefit to those who observe the [mitzva](cmds613.html) of mezuzah, and that the mezuzah serves as a constant reminder of [HaShem](hashem.html) and His Torah.

**The** [**seven**](seven.html) **seals (mezuzah** [**mitzvot**](cmds613.html)**)**

Nachmanides and *Sefer HaChinnukh[[6]](#footnote-6)* point out that:

At the root of the [mitzva](cmds613.html) [of the mezuzah] lies the purpose that it should remind a person about faith in [HaShem](hashem.html) every [time](time.html) he [or she] enters the home or leaves it.

[Abraham](avraham.html) ibn Ezra, in his treatise on the philosophy of [mitzvot](cmds613.html) *Sefer Yesod Morah Ve-*[*Sod*](sod.html) *Ha-Torah*, gives a similar rationale for the precept of mezuzah as a reminder to observe all religious precepts. He writes:

The reason Scripture gives for [tzitzith](tzitzith.html) ([fringes](tzitzith.html)) is, ‘you may remember and do all My [commandments](cmds613.html)’[[7]](#footnote-7) when you constantly look upon the [tzitzith](tzitzith.html)[[8]](#footnote-8). The same applies to “And thou shalt bind them ([tefillin](tefillin.html))... and thou shalt write them (mezuzah) [on the doorposts]”.[[9]](#footnote-9)

Thus, according to ibn Ezra, a mezuzah (just like the [tzitzith](tzitzith.html) and [tefillin](tefillin.html)) serves as a reminder to fulfill all [commandments](cmds613.html). Thus we see that the Ibn Ezra agrees that the mezuzah is a pars pro toto,[[10]](#footnote-10) an allusion, for the whole Torah.

Notice how the [mitzvot](cmds613.html) found in the mezuzah tend to reinforce our remberance of [HaShem](hashem.html).

The [first](one.html) parsha of the mezuzah contains the most fundamental concept of Torah: The unity of [HaShem](hashem.html). This concept, that all the diverse phenomena that exists in this [world](worlds.html) are the result of [One](one.html) Source, and not the result of conflicting forces, is the foundation of our faith and is what sets Judaism apart from all the ancient and modern ideas and religions.

The [first](one.html) parsha, *Devarim 6:4-9*, contains [seven](seven.html) specific [mitzvot](cmds613.html), according to Maimonides[[11]](#footnote-11).

1. **The precept of the oneness of the Eternal Lord.** (+417 Devarim 6:4)
2. **The precept of love for the Eternal Lord.** (+418 Devarim 6:5)
3. **The precept of Torah** [**study**](study.html)**.** (+419 Devarim 6:7)
4. **The** [**mitzva**](cmds613.html) **of reciting the** [**Shema**](shema.html) **every morning and evening.** (+420 Devarim 6:4,7)
5. **The precept of the** [**Tefillin**](tefillin.html) **of the** [**hand**](fourteen.html)**.** (+421 Devarim 6:8)
6. **The precept of the** [**Tefillin**](tefillin.html) **of the** [**head**](body.html)**.** (+422 Devarim 6:8)
7. **The precept of the mezuzah on the doorpost.** (+423 Devarim 6:9)

The second parsha, *Devarim 11:13-21*, does not contain any [mitzvot](cmds613.html), according to Maimonides[[12]](#footnote-12).

The second parsha, of the mezuzah, [teaches](teacher.html) the principle of a divine expense account. The mezuzah is a reminder in times of prosperity that our abundance is an expense account which is dependent upon our observance of the Torah and the [teaching](teacher.html) of the Torah to the [world](worlds.html). In times of deprivation, our expense account misfortunes come as a punishment for our [sins](sin.html), our failure to deliver the goods. More importantly, the performance of the [mitzvot](cmds613.html) is to be done to love, or connect, with [HaShem](hashem.html). We do not serve for a reward. That comes in the [olam haba](futures.html). The “rewards” mentioned are merely the expense account whereby we are enabled to continue to live easily so that we will have [time](time.html) to serve [HaShem](hashem.html) and to connect with Him.

Why did [HaShem](hashem.html) [command](cmds613.html) us regarding the mezuzah? The mezuzah is a portion of Holy Torah, inscribed in the same manner and script as a Torah. The mezuzah contains the [commands](cmds613.html) that [HaShem](hashem.html) has given Israel to remind them to remember, and to perform, all the [commands](cmds613.html) of the Torah. The mezuzah is a par-pro-toto of the entire Torah. Because it is impossible to write an entire [Torah scroll](letters.html) on the doorposts of our homes, [HaShem](hashem.html) gave us a reminder, the mezuzah. Thus the mezuzah sums up the Torah as a reminder. [One](one.html) who is diligent to remember and perform the [commands](cmds613.html) of [HaShem](hashem.html), will have a mezuzah to form a reminder to obey the [mitzvot](cmds613.html) of the Torah. This reminder will greet them every [time](time.html) they enter a room of their house.

These [seven](seven.html) [mitzvot](cmds613.html) are the [seven](seven.html) seals that constitute our Torah obligations as a summary of the entire Torah. Further, they constitute our protection from the wrath of [HaShem](hashem.html). This is the scroll written on the inside and out, which will be used to judge the Children of Israel and the [world](worlds.html).

The protection of the mezuzah is a bit like the protection that [angels](angels.html) have from sinning. Even though, technically, an [angel](angels.html) has [freewill](freewill.html), he will almost never [sin](sin.html) because the [consequences](conseq.html) are so clear. It is like asking a sane man to step off the roof of a fifty story building. It just won’t happen. Not because he can’t, but rather he won’t because the [consequences](conseq.html) are so clear.

In the same way, [one](one.html) who constantly sees his mezuzot has a constant reminder of [HaShem](hashem.html) and the [consequences](conseq.html) for [sin](sin.html).

Now lets take a look at some sources which suggest that the [one](one.html) who observe the [mitzva](cmds613.html) of mezuzah, has the ability to be protected from evil.

**The mezuzah provides protection**

Hakham [Yaakov](israelja.html) Tzemach[[13]](#footnote-13) wrote the following:

This is the mystery of the *mezuzah*,

which is the *embodiment* *of* Sovereignty,

because the *mezuzah* is numerically

the same as *the* *Divine* [*Name*](name.html) *of* A D N Y (65).

The *mezuzah* is placed on the bottom part of the top [third](three.html)

of the doorpost, to signify Sovereignty, which emerges

from the higher [third](three.html) part of

Beauty of the Little [Face](body.html).

This is the mystery of the sentence

“Yea, the Almighty shall be your defence, and you shall

have plenty of silver,” which uses the [name](name.html)

*Sh’a’dd’ai*’ (the Almighty)[[14]](#footnote-14)

which is a shield against the Shells (*external* *forces*)

that are called *tzarich* (need).

For this is how Sovereignty emerges.

The Sovereignty *indicates* *the* *mezuzah*,

which is on the outside of the Little [Face](body.html),

so the Shells will not have a grasp there.

There is a power in the [name](name.html) of Shaddai to dissipate the

Shells, which are called *tzarich*

Does a mezuzah protect the people in a house, as Hakham [Yaakov](israelja.html) Tzemach suggests? To answer this requires a bit of information from the Rambam.

In the [*Laws*](law.html) *of Mezuzah*, the Rambam writes, “A person should pay heed to the precept of the mezuzah; for it is an obligation perpetually binding upon all. Whenever [one](one.html) enters or leaves a home with the mezuzah on the doorpost, he will be confronted with the declaration of [HaShem](hashem.html)’s unity, blessed by His holy [name](name.html); and will *remember* the love due to [HaShem](hashem.html), and will be *aroused* from his slumbers and his foolish absorption in temporal vanities. He will realize that nothing endures to all eternity [save](salvation.html) [knowledge](knowledge.html) of the Ruler of the universe. This thought will immediately restore him to his right senses and he will [walk](walking.html) in the paths of righteousness.”[[15]](#footnote-15)

Maimonides says that the point of the [mitzva](cmds613.html) is to change the person who performs it. When you do the [mitzvah](cmds613.html), you’re connecting to [HaShem](hashem.html), by thinking about the text of the mezuzah or just by doing what [HaShem](hashem.html) commanded. Since [HaShem](hashem.html) is the “protector of Israel”, as the morning [prayer](prayer.html) says, when you connect with Him, you get His protection.

The mezuzah is there to keep away evil spirits. Not those that float around, the figments of a rich imagination. But those that we can control, inside our doors and our hearts. Most [mitzvot](cmds613.html) have the power to protect while we are actively engaged in performing them, but the mezuzah is unique in that it protects even as we [sleep](mashal.html).[[16]](#footnote-16)

The word *mezuzah* appears for the [first](one.html) [time](time.html), in the Torah, in the account of the [Exodus](exodus.html) [from Egypt](thebirth.html). Before the last [plague](plagues.html), killing the Egyptian firstborn, [HaShem](hashem.html) warned the Bne Israel to mark their doorposts with the [blood](body.html) of the [Pesach](passover.html) ([Passover](passover.html)) lamb so that [HaShem](hashem.html) would pass over their houses. The Torah says:

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 12:7,23*** *And they shall take of the* [*blood*](body.html) *and they shall put it on the* [*two*](two.html) *mezuzot (doorposts) and on the lintel... For the Lord will pass through to smite the Egyptians, and when He seeth the* [*blood*](body.html) *upon the lintel, and on the* [*two*](two.html) *doorposts, the Lord will pass over the door, and He will not allow the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite [you].*

Obviously, [HaShem](hashem.html) does not need [signs](signs.html) to [know](daat.html) whether a [Jew](gen-jew.html) or an Egyptian lives in a certain house. [HaShem](hashem.html) sees everything without needing splatterings of [blood](body.html) on doorposts. So what is the meaning of this? Based on the [Zohar](orallaw.html), the Kabbalist, Rabbi Eliahu Leon Levi, explains that the underlying mystical meaning is [speaking](mashal.html) about *us*. The [two](two.html) side posts of the door represent the [legs](body.html) of person. The upper mantle represents the torso. The [blood](body.html) was to be placed where a mezuzah is fastened to a doorpost, [two](two.html)-thirds of the way to the top. This represents the place of the [brit mila](circumcz.html), the [male](male+female.html) organ. Just as the word שדי - shaddai is written on the outside of a mezuza, signifying [one](one.html) of the Names of [HaShem](hashem.html), so too, the [brit mila](circumcz.html)h is considered to be invisibly stamped with this same [Name](name.html) of [HaShem](hashem.html).

This is why this [festival](festival.html) is called [Pesach](passover.html), because [HaShem](hashem.html) passed over the houses with the [blood](body.html) on the doorposts. The *Mechilta*, in Parshat Bo, states that these verses are the source of the concept of mezuzah:

*Now consider: The* [*blood*](body.html) *of the* [*Passover*](passover.html)[*sacrifice*](korbanot.html) *was but of little weight, for it was required but once, not for all* [*generations*](toldot.html)*, and by night only, not by day; yet He would ‘not allow the destroyer... to strike you.’ How much more will He not permit the destroyer into the house which bears a mezuzah, which is of greater weight, seeing that the Divine* [*Name*](name.html) *is repeated there* [*ten*](ten.html) *times, it is there by day and night, and it is a* [*law*](law.html) *for all* [*generations*](toldot.html)*.*

The mezuzah, therefore, recalls the [Exodus](exodus.html) [from Egypt](thebirth.html), when the lamb’s [blood](body.html) smeared on the doorpost *identified* the homes of the Bne Israel that [HaShem](hashem.html) passed over during the [plague](plagues.html) of the [first](one.html) born. The [Zohar](orallaw.html) speaks of this [connection](connection.html):

***Soncino*** [***Zohar***](orallaw.html)***, Shemoth, Section 2, Page 36a*** *Said R. Abba: ‘In how many ways does the Holy* [*One*](one.html) *show His lovingkindness to His people! A man builds a house; says the Holy* [*One*](one.html) *to him: “Write My* [*Name*](name.html) *and put it upon thy door (mezuzah), and thou wilt sit inside thy house and I will sit outside thy door and protect thee!” And here, in* [*connection*](connection.html) *with the* [*Passover*](passover.html)*, He says: “You inscribe on your doors the* [*sign*](signs.html) *of the mystery of My Faith and I shall protect you from the outside!”*

Further, the mezuzah and the [blood](body.html) on the door posts are both connected to [Mashiach](mashiach.html).

[Blood](body.html) on doorposts came from [Pesach](passover.html) lamb which represents [Mashiach](mashiach.html).

***1 Corinthians 5:7*** *Purge out therefore the old* [*leaven*](chametz.html)*, that ye may be a* [*new*](new.html) *lump, as ye are* [*unleavened*](chametz.html)*. For even* [*Mashiach*](mashiach.html) *our* [*passover*](passover.html) *is sacrificed for us:*

The mezuzah is a pars pro toto for the Torah, and the [Mashiach](mashiach.html) is the Living Torah, as Yochanan explains.

***Yochanan (John) 1:1-3*** *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.*

We understand that when someone is talking about the “Word of G-d” that they are referring to the Torah. In this pasuk, Yochanan is clearly calling [Yeshua](yeshua.html), The Word of G-d, the Torah.

Thus we understand that the:

**Mezuzah**

**=** [**Blood**](body.html) **on the doorposts**

**=** [**Mashiach**](mashiach.html) **ben** [**Joseph**](joseph.html)

The Torah promises that anyone who carefully observes the [mitzva](cmds613.html) of mezuzah will lead a longer, richer life, as will their descendants:

***Devarim (Deuteronomy) 11:18-21*** *Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your* [*heart*](body.html) *and in your soul, and bind them for a* [*sign*](signs.html) *upon your* [*hand*](fourteen.html)*, that they may be as frontlets between your* [*eyes*](body.html)*. 19 And ye shall* [*teach*](teacher.html) *them your children,* [*speaking*](mashal.html) *of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. 20 And thou shalt write them upon the door posts of thine house, and upon thy gates: 21 That your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *sware unto your* [*fathers*](fathers.html) *to give them, as the days of* [*heaven*](heaven.html) *upon the earth.*

Notice that the [command](cmds613.html) to attach a mezuzah is immediately followed by the promise of long life. The [twelfth](twelve.html) rule of Rabbi Ishmael says: *A matter derived from its context, or a matter derived from its end* (i.e. from what follows it). Thus we learn that a mezuzah will prolong our days and the days of our children, because it immediately follws the [command](cmds613.html) to attach a mezuzah.

It is further strengthened and elevated to [Jewish](gen-jew.html) [law](law.html), halakhah, in the Shulchan Arukh:

He who is careful and particular in the observance of mezuzah – his days and the days of his children will be lengthened.

Furthermore, the Code of [Jewish](gen-jew.html) [Law](law.html)[[17]](#footnote-17) rules that the mezuzah, aside from its reward of longevity for oneself and [one](one.html)’s children stated in the Torah, has the effect of guarding the house and its inhabitants from any harm. The Beth [Yosef](joseph.html) calls this an open miracle.

The Targum of Pslam 121:5 makes it clear that [HaShem](hashem.html) guards us on account of the mezzuzah:

[***Psalms***](psalms1.html) ***(Tehillim) 121:1*** *A song that was uttered on the ascents of the abyss. I will lift up my* [*eyes*](body.html) *to the mountains. Whence will come my help? 2. My help is from the presence of the Lord, who made* [*heaven*](heaven.html) *and earth. 3. He will not allow your* [*foot*](heel.html) *to falter, your guardian does not slumber. 4. Behold, He does not slumber and He will not* [*sleep*](mashal.html)*, the guardian of Israel. 5. The Lord will guard you, the Lord will overshadow you, on account of the mezuzah affixed on your right side as you enter.**6. By day, when the* [*sun*](hachama.html) *rules, the morning-*[*demons*](demons.html) *will not smite you, nor will the liliths, at night, when the* [*moon*](chodesh.html) *rules. 7. The Word of the Lord will guard you from all harm, he will guard your soul. 8. The Lord will guard your going out for business and your* [*coming*](coming.html) *in to* [*study*](study.html) *Torah, from now and forevermore.*

The [Talmud](orallaw.html) also has a few of passages which [speak](mashal.html) about the protection afforded by the mezuzah:

***Tractate Menochot 43b*** *Rabbi Eliezer b.* [*Yaakov*](israelja.html) *said, If a person wears* [*tefillin*](tefillin.html)*, tzitzit on his garment, and has a mezuzah on his door, it can be taken for granted that he will not* [*sin*](sin.html)*, for it says, “A* [*three*](three.html)*-ply cord (*[*tefillin*](tefillin.html)*, tzizith, and mezuzah) is not easily cut”[[18]](#footnote-18)*

***Avodah Zarah 11a*** *[When] Onkelos the son of Kalonymus became a proselyte, the Emperor sent a contingent of Roman [soldiers] after him, but he enticed them by [citing] scriptural verses and they became converted to Judaism. Thereupon, the Emperor sent another Roman cohort after him, bidding them not to say anything to him. As they were about to take him away with them, he said to them: ‘Let me tell you just an ordinary thing: [In a procession] the torchlighter carries the light in front of the torchbearer, the torchbearer in front of the leader, the leader in front of the governor, the governor in front of the chief officer; but does the chief officer carry the light in front of the people [that follow]?’ ‘No!’ they replied. Said he: ‘Yet the Holy* [*One*](one.html)*, blessed be He, does carry the light before Israel, for Scripture says. And the Lord went before them . . . in a pillar of* [*fire*](fire.html) *to give them light.’[[19]](#footnote-19) Then they, too, became converted. Again he sent another cohort ordering them not to enter into any conversation whatever with him. So they took hold of him; and as they were* [*walking*](walking.html) *on he saw the mezuzah which was fixed on the door-frame and he placed his* [*hand*](fourteen.html) *on it saying to them: ‘Now what is this?’ and they replied: ‘You tell us then.’ Said he, ‘According to universal custom, the mortal king dwells within, and his servants keep guard on him without; but [in the case of] the Holy* [*One*](one.html)*, blessed be He, it is His servants who* [*dwell*](dwelling.html) *within whilst He keeps guard on them from without; as it is said: The Lord shall guard thy going out and thy* [*coming*](coming.html) *in from this* [*time*](time.html) *forth and for evermore.’[[20]](#footnote-20) Then they, too, were converted to Judaism. He sent for him no more.*

***Menachoth 33b*** *Raba said, The proper performance of the precept is to fix it in the handbreadth nearest to the street. Why? — The Rabbis say, So that* [*one*](one.html) *should encounter a precept immediately [on* [*one*](one.html)*’s return home]; R. Hanina of Sura says, So that it should protect the entire house.*

Rashi, commenting on the above passage, indicates that a properly place mezuzah will protect the entire house from dangers.

A careful reading of the Bait [Yosef](joseph.html)[[21]](#footnote-21) tells us that the mezuzah contains the power of **open,** **visible** miracles.

*“The protection of the house is an open miracle in that the others who live in houses without Mezuzot are not protected and those who live in a house with Mezuzot are protected.”*

The [Zohar](orallaw.html) tells us that a mezuzah on our doorposts will protect us from evil spirits:

***Soncino*** [***Zohar***](orallaw.html)***, Devarim, Section 3, Page 265b*** *R. Eleazar said: ‘Against all this God desired to protect Israel, and therefore a man should inscribe on the door of his house the Holy* [*Name*](name.html) *in which all faith is summed up. For wherever the Holy* [*Name*](name.html) *is the evil species cannot come and are not able to accuse a man. The place of the door of the supernal House is called mezuzah, which is a necessary part of the house, and from it flee the emissaries of justice and punishment. Correspondingly when on earth a man affixes a mezuzah to his door with his Holy* [*Name*](name.html) *inscribed in it, such a* [*one*](one.html) *is crowned with the crowns of his Master and no “evil species” come near to the door of his house.’*

Finally, we should be aware that the [mitzvot](cmds613.html) of the Torah are expressions of the will of [HaShem](hashem.html). We do not affix a mezuzah for its protection, that is merely a side benefit. We affix a mezuzah, lay [tefillin](tefillin.html)*,* light [Shabbat](sabbath.html) or [Chanukah](chanukah.html) candles, etc. for no other reason than because [HaShem](hashem.html) [wants](needs.html) us to do so. We performs these acts out of love for [HaShem](hashem.html), and for no other reason. The purpose of the scheme of [creation](bara.html) is that the Bne Israel, through performance of the [mitzvot](cmds613.html), should express [HaShem](hashem.html)’s will, and thereby His sovereignty, in this [world](worlds.html).

**Inspections**

A *kosher* mezuzah is [hand](fourteen.html)-written on genuine parchment, prepared from the skin of a kosher animal. A specially trained scribe carefully writes the words using special black ink and a quill pen. The [letters](letters.html) must be written according to [halacha](walking.html), and every [letter](letters.html) and word must be correct. Any mistakes or missing [letters](letters.html) invalidates the entire parchment.

Because of humidity, temperature changes, and natural aging, the [letters](letters.html) on a mezuzah can become cracked or faded. For this reason, a mezuzah should be checked twice every [seven](seven.html) years[[22]](#footnote-22). This suggests that we should check our mezuzah when we finish reading the Torah according to the [triennial](shmita.html) [cycle](cycles.html). This [cycle](cycles.html) lasts [three](three.html) and a half years.

***Yoma 11a*** *For it has been* [*taught*](teacher.html)*: The mezuzah of an individual’s [house] should be examined twice every* [*seven*](seven.html) *years, and of public buildings twice every fifty years.*

This [connection](connection.html) between the [triennial](shmita.html) Torah [cycle](cycles.html) and the inspection of the mezuzah is not coincidental. Since the mezuzah is a pars pro toto for the entire Torah, then it makes sense that we would inspect the mezuzah as often as we read (inspect) the whole Torah.

**The mezuzah and the** [**Chanukah**](chanukah.html)

According to the [Talmud](orallaw.html), the chanukiyah should be outside of the door on the left side and the mezuzah should be on the right side in order that we should be surrounded by [HaShem](hashem.html)’s [commandments](cmds613.html).

***Shabbath 22a*** *Rabbah said: The Hanukkah lamp should be placed within the handbreadth nearest the door. And where is it placed? R. Aha son of Raba said: On the right* [*hand*](mashal.html) *side: R. Samuel of Difti said: On the left* [*hand*](mashal.html) *side. And the* [*law*](law.html) *is, on the left, so that the Hanukkah lamp shall be on the left and the mezuzah on the right.*

The [Talmud](orallaw.html) compares the menorah to the mezuzah. We can see that there are several differences between the [two](two.html). The mezuzah is on the right; the chanukiyah is on the left. The mezuzah is on the outside, but it is for the inside of the house; it protects the inhabitants. The menorah is on the outside; its message is for the outside [world](worlds.html) to proclaim to all the miracle of [Chanukah](chanukah.html).

The [Talmud](orallaw.html) goes on to tell us the advantage of the chanukiyah and the mezuzah.

***Shabbath 23b*** *R. Huna said: He who habitually practises [the lighting of] the lamp will possess scholarly sons; he who is observant of [the precept of] mezuzah will* [*merit*](merit.html) *a beautiful* [*dwelling*](dwelling.html)*;*

Why is the chanukiyah placed on the left and the mezuzah on the right? Would they not serve their purpose if the order were reversed? To understand why the chanukiyah must be placed to the left, while the mezuzah goes on the right, we must see their essential function. The [mitzva](cmds613.html) of mezuzah entails the affixing of a handwritten parchment scroll containing the [Shema](shema.html) to [one](one.html)’s doorposts. The verses quoted in the mezuzah include the directive to love [HaShem](hashem.html) with all your [heart](body.html), all your soul, and all your possessions. The [mitzva](cmds613.html) of mezuzah thus serves as a symbol of the concept that by dedicating ourselves and all the substance of this [world](worlds.html) to the service of [HaShem](hashem.html), we express [HaShem](hashem.html)’s sovereignty even where it is not obvious, and bring out that the *will* of [HaShem](hashem.html) is manifest even within that which was created by the *word* of [HaShem](hashem.html). The mezuzah represents the [*mitzva*](cmds613.html) *candle* which makes possible the *light of Torah*, found in the chanukiyah.

This light of Torah is precisely what the ancient Greeks sought to extinguish during the period of [Chanukah](chanukah.html). The Greeks did not wish to annihilate the [Jews](gen-jew.html) [physically](physical.html); their goal was to Hellenize them and, as the *al hanissim* [Chanukah](chanukah.html) [prayer](prayer.html) expresses it, “cause them to forget Your Torah” (G-d forbid!).

[Mitzva](cmds613.html) observance is associated with the right side, since [mitzvot](cmds613.html) draw us closer to [HaShem](hashem.html), and Scripture says:

***Shir HaShirim (Song of Songs) 2:6*** *His left* [*hand*](mashal.html) *is under my* [*head*](body.html)*, and his right* [*hand*](mashal.html) *does embrace me.*

And

***Sota 47a*** *It has been* [*taught*](teacher.html)*: R. Simeon b. Eleazar says: Also human nature[[23]](#footnote-23) should a child and woman thrust aside with the left* [*hand*](mashal.html) *and draw near with the right* [*hand*](mashal.html)*.[[24]](#footnote-24)*

“And His right [hand](mashal.html) embraces me.” On the other [hand](fourteen.html), the left side is associated with a “distant,” as opposed to close, relationship. The Greeks tried to push [HaShem](hashem.html) into the distance, even “off the map,” as the saying goes.

Further, we must see that scripture itself hints to the mezuzah on the right and the chanukiyah on the left.

***Mishlei (Proverbs) 3:16*** *Length of days is in her right* [*hand*](mashal.html)*; and in her left* [*hand*](mashal.html) *riches and honour.*

As we have previously seen, the mezuzah is associated with long life, both because it represents keeping all the [mitzvot](cmds613.html) of the Torah, and because it affords protection from evil. The chanukiyah is associated with riches and honor as is seen when the menorah was kindled, in the days of the Maccabees, that it brought honor to [HaShem](hashem.html) and His people. The riches are associated with our nearness to [HaShem](hashem.html), the ultimate in in richness.

**Mezuzah halachot**

What are the technical specs? According to the [Talmud](orallaw.html),[[25]](#footnote-25) the following conditions obligate a room in mezuzah:

1. The room must be at least 4 cubits by 4 cubits (about [four](four.html) square meters).
2. The entrance must have [two](two.html) doorposts and a lintel, and the entrance should be at least [ten](ten.html) handbreadths high (about 80-100 cm.). If the right side of the opening is flush with the wall, or if the top of the opening is flush with the ceiling, no mezuzah is required.
3. The room should be non-holy. This excludes a [synagogue](synagog.html), which is holy. (Since our [synagogues](synagog.html) today also contain an office, social hall, etc,, a mezuzah is required.)
4. The room should be intended for human occupancy (e.g. excluding a barn), and for permanent occupancy (e.g. excluding a [succah](succoth.html)).
5. The room should be made for dignified occupancy (e.g. excluding a bathroom).

When placing the mezuzah in the case or on the wall, be sure that the [Hebrew](hebrew.html) word “Shaddai,” which is written on the back of the parchment, is facing outward (i.e. toward the entrance once it is affixed). Also, make sure the mezuzah is not upside down!

The mezuzah should be placed on the right-[hand](fourteen.html) doorpost, i.e. on the right side of the door as you enter the room. The [Talmud](orallaw.html) learns this from the word “your house” (*beit’echa*), which can be rendered “as you enter” (*bi’atcha*).

How far up on the doorpost? The mezuzah should be placed on the lower part of the upper-[third](three.html) of the doorpost -- approximately shoulder height. (The [Talmud](orallaw.html) compares this to [Tefillin](tefillin.html), which is placed on the upper arm.)

At which angle? The Ashkenazi custom is to position the mezuzah at a slight angle, with the top half pointing toward the room you are about to enter. The Sephardi custom is to place the mezuzah straight up vertically. (If the doorpost is too narrow to allow for a slant, Ashkenazim also place it vertically.)

If the doorway is deep, the mezuzah should be placed on the doorpost within [three](three.html) inches of the entrance. If the doorway has little depth, i.e. it is not possible to place the mezuzah on the doorpost within the doorway itself, then the mezuzah is placed on the outer part of the doorpost, within [three](three.html) inches of the doorway.

The mezuzah should be permanently affixed, with glue, nails, or screws. Tape that would easily fall off if bumped into is regarded as too temporary to be considered *affixed*. Similarly, velcro and magnets may not be used.

The mezuzah must be affixed both on the top and bottom. When using double-sided foam tape, either use [one](one.html) long piece which reaches the top and bottom of the mezuzah case, or put [two](two.html) pieces, [one](one.html) on top and [one](one.html) on the bottom.

A strong glue or double-sided foam tape is acceptable only if the case opens from the top or bottom. If the case opens from the back, then by using glue or foam tape, only the removable back of the cover will be “affixed to the doorpost,” while the hollow section containing the mezuzah will not. Therefore, a case which opens from the back should be affixed with nails or screws. [If that option does not exist, [one](one.html) may use tape to seal the back of the case to the [body](body.html) of the case, and then post it as such.]

The mouinting procedure is to hold the mezuzah against the spot upon which it will be affixed, then recite this blessing:

אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשַׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו .בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,

וְצִוָנוּ לִקְבּוֹעַ מְזוּזָה

*Baruch atta Adonai Eloheinu melech haolam, asher kideshanu bemitzvotav vetzivanu likboa mezuzah.*

Blessed are You, [HaShem](hashem.html) our God, King of the Universe, Who sanctified us with His [mitzvot](cmds613.html), and commanded us to affix a mezuzah.

**Mezuzah gematria**

The mezuzah contains [twenty](twenty.html)-[two](two.html) lines of 713 [letters](letters.html), composing 170 words. Every [letter](letters.html) has a several [laws](law.html) pertaining to its form. In order for a mezuzah to be written in accordance with all 4649 of its [laws](law.html), it must thus meet thousands of requirements. If even [one](one.html) of the 713 [letters](letters.html) in a mezuzah is missing or shaped incorrectly, the mezuzah is rendered invalid, the [mitzva](cmds613.html) is unfulfilled, and the blessing recited over it is in vain.

The following section was written by Alexander Poltorak.

A mezuzah is traditionally written on [twenty](twenty.html)-[two](two.html) lines, corresponding to the [twenty](twenty.html)-[two](two.html) [letters](letters.html) of the Alef Beth. These [twenty](twenty.html)-[two](two.html) [letters](letters.html) together with [ten](ten.html) [numbers](nchart.html)-*sefiroth* (Divine Emanations) comprise [thirty](thirty.html)-[two](two.html) Paths of Wisdom. The [letters](letters.html) represent the qualitative aspects of the [Creation](bara.html), while the [numbers](nchart.html) represent the quantitative aspects. Even though the mezuzah has only [twenty](twenty.html)-[two](two.html) lines, corresponding to the [twenty](twenty.html)-[two](two.html) [letters](letters.html), it implicitly contains reference to the [ten](ten.html) *sefiroth* as well, since [twenty](twenty.html)-[two](two.html) lines connect the [ten](ten.html) points in the array (Figure 1).

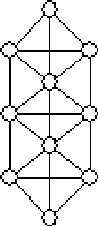


Figure 1

This is further alluded to in the very word *mezuzah,* which has a *milui[[26]](#footnote-26)* equal to 231, the [number](nchart.html) of all possible pairs of [letters](letters.html) in the 22-[letter](letters.html) Alef-Beth ([fig](bethphag.html). 2). These 231 Gates of Wisdom contain the mystery of [creation](bara.html), and it is said that they have been used in the manufacture of a *Golem[[27]](#footnote-27)* through meditation upon these [letter](letters.html) combinations.

The text of a mezuzah has 170 words. The [number](nchart.html) 170 is equal to the combined gematria of [two](two.html) words: *banim[[28]](#footnote-28) (children) and chayim[[29]](#footnote-29) (life), as it is written,*

***Deavrim (Deuteronomy) 11:13-21*** *“...So that your days may be multiplied; and the days of your children...”.*

The [number](nchart.html) 170 is also equal to the sum total of the gematria of the words *chayim* (life) and *emunah[[30]](#footnote-30)* (faith), as it is written,

***Habakkuk 2:4*** *The righteous shall live by his faith.*

The text of the mezuzah has 713 [letters](letters.html). The [number](nchart.html) 713 is the numerical value (*gematria*) of the word *teshuvah*, repentance. The word *mezuzah* has the numerical value of 65, the value of another [Name](name.html) of G‑d, *Adonai* (Master, L‑rd). This [Name](name.html) is associated with the Divine Attribute of *Malkhuth* (Kingship). Perhaps this comes to [teach](teacher.html) us that by looking at the mezuzah we remind ourselves of the great Master of the Universe, the King of Kings to Whose Supreme Will we must subjugate our will, submitting to the yoke of the Heavenly Kingdom. This moves us to repentance.

The gematria of mezuzah (65) equals the gematria of the word *hekhal*, chamber, as in *Hekhal HaKodesh*, the Holy Chamber, or *Hekhal*, the main Hall of the [Temple](temple.html). This supports the notion that the mezuzah can turn a house into a place of holiness, a miniature [temple](temple.html).

The sum total of the [number](nchart.html) of lines, words, and [letters](letters.html), in the mezuzah, is equal to 22+170+713=905. This [number](nchart.html) is the gematria of the phrase found in the [Grace](grace.html) After Meals: *Berachah Merubah Babaith HaZeh (Great blessing to this house)*.

The [sixth](six.html) Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi [Joseph](joseph.html) I. Schneersohn, points out that the word mezuzah consists of [three](three.html) syllables, *me-zu-zah*. The [first](one.html) syllable, *me-*, alludes to the [*Mishna*](orallaw.html), the [Oral Torah](orallaw.html), because the [Mishna](orallaw.html) and the [Talmud](orallaw.html) start and end with the [letter](letters.html) *Mem*. The second syllable *-zu-* alludes to the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) [nation](nations.html) as it is written:

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 15:13*** *Am* ***Zu*** *gaalta – this people which Thou hast* [*redeemed*](redemption.html)*.*

The [third](three.html) syllable *-zah-* alludes to G‑d, as it is written:

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 15:2******Zeh*** *Ey-li v’anveyhu–this is my G‑d, and I will glorify Him.*

This shows the unity of the [nation](nations.html) of Israel with G‑d as it is achieved through the Torah, as the [Zohar](orallaw.html) states:

[*Three*](three.html) *things are bound up* [*one*](one.html) *with the other: Israel is bound with the Torah and the Torah is bound up with G-d.*

Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson elaborates on this concept further. He points out that the second syllable, *-zu-*, is the feminine pronoun *this*. The [third](three.html) syllable, *-zah-*, has the same [letters](letters.html) as *zeh*, the masculine pronoun *this*. As the Rebbe explains, this alludes to the unification of the feminine and masculine aspects of the Divine as it is expressed in Torah.

The word mezuzah itself is derived from the root *zuz*, *to move*. The [first](one.html) [letter](letters.html) of the word *mezuzah – Mem*, being the middle [letter](letters.html) of the Alef-Beth, also denotes a transition between past and [future](future.html). It is the [first](one.html) [letter](letters.html) of the word *mayim*, water, denoting passage of [time](time.html). The [letter](letters.html) *Shin* traditionally displayed on the mezuzah case is the [first](one.html) [letter](letters.html) of the word ***Sh****anah*, year, and ***Sh****inui*, change. Yet the mezuzah must be affixed to the doorposts of a house, the symbol of settlement. Moreover, the [law](law.html) requires that mezuzah is to be affixed to a doorpost in a permanent and immovable manner. Perhaps this apparent contradiction contains a message. We are forever caught up in a race of [time](time.html), in a race of life. On the other [hand](fourteen.html), the [letter](letters.html) *Mem*, the [first](one.html) [letter](letters.html) of the word *mezuzah* and also the [first](one.html) [letter](letters.html) of the words *mikvah[[31]](#footnote-31)* and mayim (water) represents the present moment. Passing through the door and touching the mezuzah to [kiss](mashal.html) it, we ground ourselves in the present moment, in the here and now. We ground ourselves in our timeless tradition. We realize at that moment that in these fast-changing times we must not forget the eternal values of Torah.

**[Freedom](freedom.html)**

In the Book of Shemot ([Exodus](exodus.html)) we find the word *mezuzah* in a most unexpected context. In Shemot 21:5-6, Torah enjoins a master to set his [Jewish](gen-jew.html) slave free, in the seventh year, after [six](six.html) years of service. The Torah continues with this [connection](connection.html) to the mezuzah:

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 21:5-6*** *But if the servant shall plainly say: I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free; then shall his master bring him unto the judges, and he shall bring him to the door, or unto the doorpost (mezuzah); and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve forever[[32]](#footnote-32).*

A slave who rejects his [freedom](freedom.html) is liable to have his ear pierced next to the mezuzah.

The doorpost is when the [blood](body.html) of the [Passover](passover.html) lamb was applied. As such, it was the place where are [freedom](freedom.html) began. After all, only a free man can celebrate [Passover](passover.html). In the above passage we see that the doorpost is also used for the slave who prefers to be a slave to a man rather than a slave to [HaShem](hashem.html). Only those who serve [HaShem](hashem.html) are truly free.

Thus a man loses his [freedom](freedom.html) when his ear is pierced next to the mezuzah. Thus the mezuzah is associated with [freedom](freedom.html). It is associated with those who serve [HaShem](hashem.html) and obey His [mitzvot](cmds613.html). We see that the mezuzah was the witness to the transformation of a [nation](nations.html) of slaves into a [nation](nations.html) of [HaShem](hashem.html)’s servants. The mezuzah is an eternal symbol of [freedom](freedom.html).

**[Gentiles](gen-jew.html) and the mezuzah**

According to Ashkenaz [halacha](walking.html)[[33]](#footnote-33), when a [Jew](gen-jew.html) and a [Gentile](gen-jew.html) share a house, each having his own designated room or area, then a mezuzah is not required on the common doorway. However, [halacha](walking.html) does permit the shared house to have a mezuzah on the common doorway. Thus we learn that a [Gentile](gen-jew.html) may have mezuzot on his doorposts, but, he is not required to have them.

According to Sephardi [halacha](walking.html)[[34]](#footnote-34), the Rashba [teaches](teacher.html) that a common doorway is required to have a mezuzah.

There is a well [known](daat.html) passage in the [Jerusalem](city.html) [Talmud](orallaw.html) which illustrates that even the [Gentile](gen-jew.html) can [merit](merit.html) protection through the mezuzah.

[***Talmud***](orallaw.html) ***Yerushalmi, Peah 1:1*** *The Parthian king, Artiban, once sent a priceless jewel to Rabbi Judah the Prince (135 c.e. - 220 c.e.), who was the compiler of the* [*Mishna*](orallaw.html) *and* [*one*](one.html) *of the wealthiest* [*Jews*](gen-jew.html)*. The king made it obvious that he expected something of equal value in return. The Rabbi’s return gift to the king was a Mezuzah. The king’s reply was: “I sent you something priceless and you sent me something that can be bought for a paltry sum!?” The Rabbi answered: “You sent me something that I must hire a guard to watch and I sent you something that will watch over you!” After a while, the king’s daughter fell ill* (in the words of the [Talmud](orallaw.html) she was possessed by a [demon](demons.html))*, and all of the doctors could not cure her. Rebbe instructed him to place the mezuzah on her door, and she recovered.*

Additionally, the Sanhedrin’s special beit din for Bnei [Noach](noachide.html) [halacha](walking.html) has issued a halachic ruling that Noachides can hang mezuzot on their doorways.

My Beloved [teacher](teacher.html), Hakham Haggai, has [taught](teacher.html) us that [Gentiles](gen-jew.html) who fear [HaShem](hashem.html) MUST affix mezuzot, according to II Luqas 15:

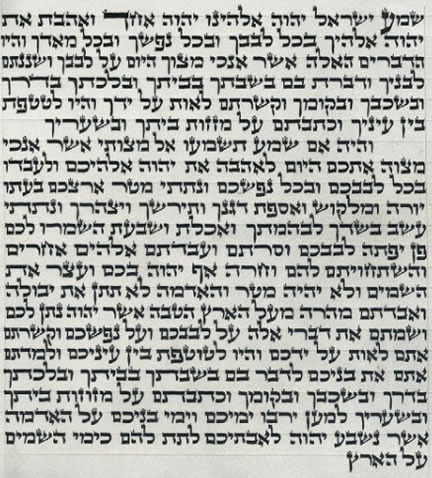
***II Luqas (Acts) 15:19-21*** *Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the* [*Gentiles*](gen-jew.html) *are turned to God: 20 But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and fornication, and things strangled, and* [*blood*](body.html)*. 21 For Moses of old* [*time*](time.html) *hath in every* [*city*](city.html) *them that preach him, being read in the* [*synagogues*](synagog.html) *every* [*sabbath*](sabbath.html) *day.*

Our Sages have [taught](teacher.html)[[35]](#footnote-35) that women are obligated to mezuzah because they need to live and be protected. Surely the same logic applies to the [Noachide](noachide.html).

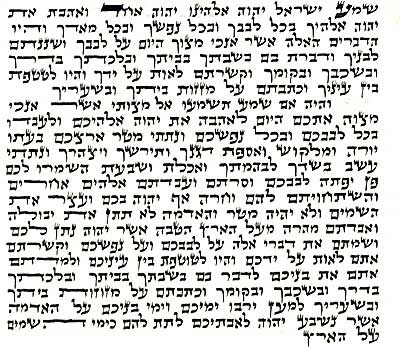
**The text of the mezuzah**

The [first](one.html) passage is “[Shema](shema.html) Israel”. The second passage is “Vehaya”.

The [first](one.html) scroll is the common Ashkenazi scroll:



This second scroll is the common Sefardi scroll:



*Hear, O Israel,* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *is our God,* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *is* [*one*](one.html)*. You shall love* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, your God, with all your* [*heart*](body.html)*, with all your soul, and with all your might. And these things that I* [*command*](cmds613.html) *you today shall be upon your* [*heart*](body.html)*. And you shall* [*teach*](teacher.html) *them to your children, and you shall* [*speak*](mashal.html) *of them when you sit in your house and when you* [*walk*](walking.html) *on the way, when you lie down and when you rise up. And you shall bind them as a* [*sign*](signs.html) *upon your arm and they shall be an ornament between your* [*eyes*](body.html)*. And you shall write them upon the doorposts of your house and on your gates.*

*And it will be that if you hearken to my* [*commandments*](cmds613.html) *that I* [*command*](cmds613.html) *you today, to love the Lord, your God, and to serve him with all your hearts and all your souls. And I will place rain for your land in its proper* [*time*](time.html)*, the early and the late* [*rains*](rains.html)*, that you may* [*gather*](gather.html) *in your grain, your wine, and your oil. And I will provide grass in your field for your cattle, and you will* [*eat*](eating.html) *and you will be satisfied. Watch yourselves, lest your* [*heart*](body.html) *be seduced and you turn astray and serve other gods, and prostrate yourselves to them. And the wrath of God will be upon you, and he will restrain the* [*heaven*](heaven.html) *and there will be no rain, and the ground will not yield its produce, and you will be lost quickly from upon the good land that God gives you. And you shall place these words of mine on your hearts and on your souls, and you shall bind them as a* [*sign*](signs.html) *upon your* [*arms*](body.html) *and they shall be ornaments between your* [*eyes*](body.html)*. And you shall* [*teach*](teacher.html) *them to your children to discuss them, when you sit in your house and when you* [*walk*](walking.html) *on the way, and when you lie down and when rise up. And you shall write them upon the doorposts of your house and upon your gates, in order to prolong your days and the days of your children upon the good land that God swore to your* [*fathers*](fathers.html) *to give them, like the days of* [*Heaven*](heaven.html) *over earth.*

**Hmmm, that’s interesting…**

In the [shema](shema.html), [HaShem](hashem.html) [commands](cmds613.html) us to love Him *with all your* [*heart*](body.html)*, with all your soul, and with all your might.* If you will search the Tanach[[36]](#footnote-36), diligently, you will find only [one](one.html) individual who ever loved [HaShem](hashem.html) with *all his might*. This amazing individual could have been [Mashiach](mashiach.html) except the people were not yet ready. King Yoshiahu (Josiah) was the last righteous king before the captivity in [Babylon](bavel.html). Note what the Tanach says about this great man:

***II Melachim (Kings) 23:24-25*** *Moreover the workers with familiar spirits, and the wizards, and the images, and the idols, and all the abominations that were spied in the land of Judah and in* [*Jerusalem*](city.html)*, did Josiah put away, that he might perform the words of the* [*law*](law.html) *which were written in the book that Hilkiah the* [*priest*](priests.html) *found in the house of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*. 25 And like unto him was there no king before him, that turned to* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *with all his* [*heart*](body.html)*, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the* [*law*](law.html) *of Moses; neither after him arose there any like him.*

When we begin looking for the [Mashiach](mashiach.html), what should we be looking for? How will we recognize this individual? I believe that we should [study](study.html) the life of King Yoshiahu to find the traits of the [Mashiach](mashiach.html).

**A mezuzah story**

The story with this mezuzah is absolutely fascinating, as it shows the great power it contains.

The son of Mr. M.S. was complaining of headaches and sharp pain in the [eyes](body.html). When he went to the doctor for a checkup, he was advised to see an eye specialist at once. After a thorough examination by the eye doctor, he was told that his son would need to be operated on immediately; otherwise he would lose his sight in [one](one.html) eye. The operation was set for the next day.

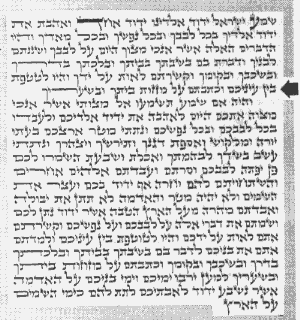
M.S. called his Rov and asked that they say Tehillim for his son in [synagogue](synagog.html) and [pray](prayer.html) for a refuah shleimoh. The Rav told him to have his mezuzot checked at once. M.S. said that he had already had all his mezuzot checked just recently, and they all turned out to be fine. The Rav told him to at least take off the [one](one.html) by his son’s bedroom and have it checked again.

That same night, the father took off the mezuzah and brought it to the sofer. He asked him to check it very carefully. [Fifteen](fifteen.html) minutes later, Mr. M.S. got a call from the sofer that the mezuzah was posul.

The very next morning, the father bought the very best Mezuzah that money could buy and put it up on the door. That very same day, at approximately 2:00 P.M., he brought his son to the hospital for a final checkup before having the operation. He was extremely nervous and edgy. Imagine his great surprise and exhilaration when the doctor came out of the examination room to inform him that he had decided not to operate as yet. He had noticed a small change for the better and decided to wait a few more days and see what would happen.

A week passed, and to the great surprise of the doctor, the headaches disappeared and the eye healed completely. Even the doctor admitted that it was an open miracle. There was no other rational explanation.

Here is a reproduction of the mezuzah. When you see this mistake it will really boggle your mind.



If you carefully compare the defective word to the proper word in my reproduction, you will see that the word einechem – עֵינֵיכֶם, in Devarim 6:8, is written with a final [letter](letters.html) mem, which makes it a plural for [*eyes*](body.html). This word **should be** *einecha*, which means *eye singular*. Thus the headaches and eye pain were directly related to the mezuzah’s defective word, on the boys bedroom doorposts! Now that is mind boggling!

**\* \* \***

Rabbi Isaiah Horowitz, the *Shelah*, writes: Performance of different [mitzvot](cmds613.html) represents allusion to varying levels of our attachment to the [Olam HaBa](futures.html). In this regard, the act of affixing a mezuzah ranks higher than donning [tefillin](tefillin.html).

\* \* \*

***Mishlei (Proverbs) 8:34*** *Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the mezuzah of my doors.*

**The bottom line**

Those who observe the [mitzva](cmds613.html) of mezuzah will [merit](merit.html) [four](four.html) things, according to our [study](study.html):

1. Long life
2. Protection
3. Kept from [sin](sin.html)
4. A beautiful home

This suggests a powerful incentive for [one](one.html) to be carefull in the observance of this [mitzva](cmds613.html). Despite this, the Tur[[37]](#footnote-37) admonishes us to be carefull to fulfill the [mitzva](cmds613.html) for its own sake, we should have mezuzot attached to our doorposts just because [HaShem](hashem.html) commanded us, and not because of its other benefits.

\* \* \*

This [study](study.html) was written by

Rabbi Dr. Hillel ben David

(Greg Killian).

Comments may be submitted to:

Rabbi Dr. Greg Killian

12210 Luckey Summit

San Antonio, TX 78252

Internet address: gkilli@aol.com

Web page: http://www.betemunah.org/

(360) 918-2905

Return to The WATCHMAN home page

Send comments to Greg Killian at his email address: gkilli@aol.com

1. The Hebrew word for commandment “mitzva - מִצְוָה” comes from the word “Tzavta” which means a “connection.” This is because HaShem’s commandments connect us to Him in a way we could never have achieved on our own. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Revelation 5:1 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Kol Bo 90, 101:4, *ad* Hil. Telifin, Umezuzah Vesefer *Torah* 5.4 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. A commentary on the *Mishne Torah* (which details Ashkenazi customs) by the Rambam. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Devarim (Deuteronomy) 6:9 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. 13th-century Jewish classic written in Spain by an anonymous *Rishon* (one of the early scholars), ascribed to R. Aaron ha-Levi of Barcelona. The book was written by a father for his young son as rational explanations of the Commandments in order of the Torah *parshioth* (weekly portions). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Bamidbar 15:40 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Bamidbar 15:39 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Devarim (Deuteronomy) 6:8-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Latin for “a part for the whole”. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Sefer HaChinuch, book four, pages 249-289 [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Sefer HaChinuch, book four, pages 339-351 [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Lurianic kabbalist [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. The letters of Sh’a’dd’ai’ (*Shin* *Daled* *Yud*) are the acronym for “guardian of the Doors of Israel” (*Shomer* *Daltot* *Yisrael*). [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Mishne Torah, Hilchot Mezuzah 6:13 [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah: 285 [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Shulchan Aruch [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Ecclesastes 4;12 [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Shemot (Exodus) 13:21 [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Tehillim (Psalms) 121:8 [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Tur Yoreh Deah*:* 285 [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. [Babylonian](bavel.html) Talmud, Yoma 11a, Shulchan Aruch (291:1) [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. One must learn to control it so as to avoid extremes. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. One must not be too severe in chiding a child or reproving a wife lest they be driven to despair. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Yoma 11, Succah 3b [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Full gematria calculated by spelling out each letter of the word and calculating the sum total. Thus, the letter Alef, with a regular gematria of 1, is spelled *Alef-Lamed-Pay* and has a *milui gematria* of 1+30+80=111. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. A man created by a kabbalist from mud. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. The word *bonim* is spelled *BNYM*. The *gematria* is (*Beth* = 2) + (*Nun* = 50) + (*Yud* = 10) + (*Mem* = 40) = 102. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. The word *chaim* is spelled *ChYYM*. The *gematria* is (*Cheth* = 8) + 2x(*Yud* = 10) + (*Mem* = 40) = 68. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. The word *emunah* is spelled *AMVNH*. The *gematria* is (*Alef* = 1) + (*Mem* = 40) + (*Vav* = 6) + (*Nun* = 50) + (*Heh* = 5) = 102. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Ritual pool used for purification by [Jewish](gen-jew.html) women once a month as a matter of [law](law.html) and by (mostly Chasidic) men every morning as a matter of custom. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Forever means in this context, as Rashi comments, until the commencement of [Jubilee](yovel.html). [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Rama Y.D. 286:1 with Pitchei Teshuva 3 [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Bedek Habayit, Yoreh Deah 286 [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Berachoth 20b [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. The “old Testament”. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Yoreh Deah: 285 [↑](#footnote-ref-37)