

לוקוטי ופסקי הלכות
"חוקי חיים"

ותלמד
 "חוקי חיים"
 לעשות רצונך
 בלבב שלם



שע"י "חדר הוראה" שכונת מנחת יצחק פעיה"ק ירושלם תובב"א - בראשות הרב חיים אהרן בלייער שליט"א

Halochos compiled by HaRav Chaim Bleier – Translated from the Hebrew edition by R' Zerachya Shicker

Dinim of

Mezuzah

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Affixing Mezuzos – 4

Parshas Ki Sisa 5783

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Now that we have explained in the last three issues where a mezuzah is required, we will explain in this final issue of this series the halachos pertaining to affixing the actual mezuzos.

Where on the Doorway to Put Up the Mezuzah

In the Space of the Doorway under the Lintel

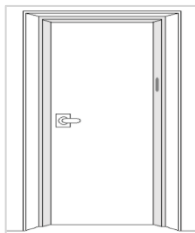
- In the doorway's space.** A mezuzah must be put in the doorway's space, as it must be in a spot where people walk through to enter the house. This is based on the word "ובשעריך," which implies the space in the gate. A doorway's space is defined as the area between the two doorposts and under the lintel (גמי מנחות דף ל"ב) (ע"ב, שו"ע יו"ד סי' רפ"ט ס"ב).
- Wide doorposts.** Even if a house has wide doorposts, the area next to them is still considered the doorway's space, and one should put the mezuzah there. Even if they are six tefachim [הגר"ח נאה – 48 cm] wide, it is considered the doorway's space and requires just one mezuzah (נמוקי"י שם).
- Some poskim hold that even if a doorway is wider than six tefachim, as long as the floor area is not 4x4 amos, it is like a thick wall and requires just one mezuzah. Others hold that even if the area is not 4x4 amos, it requires two mezuzos if it is open on the second side (ע"פ דעת רע"א שהבאנו בגליון 288 אות ל"ב).
- Wide doorposts, narrow lintel.** If the two doorposts are wide but the lintel above them is narrow, l'chatchilah the mezuzah should go on a spot on the doorpost that is also under the lintel. Also, if the right doorpost is wider than the left one, the mezuzah should go on an area of the wide doorpost that is opposite the narrow doorpost across from it. This way, the mezuzah is properly within the doorway's space (מור"ב חובת הדר פ"ח ח"ג סק"א). This is true even if it is not in the tefach adjacent to the outside (see below, 5).

Tefach Adjacent to the Outside

- If a house has wide doorposts, the mezuzah should be placed in the tefach adjacent to the outside, i.e., at the beginning of the doorpost's width, within the first tefach (סי' רפ"ט) (סי' ט"ב). The reason for this is to make the mezuzah the first thing one encounters when entering the doorway (דף ל"ג ע"ב) (טעם א' בגמי מנחות דף ל"ג ע"ב). One should see the mezuzah first, as it reminds of Hashem's Oneness and love for Hashem (פתחי מזוזות) משמעות המרדכי סי' תתקס"א, פתחי מזוזות) (סי' רפ"ט סק"ז). Another reason is so that the whole house, including the outermost tefach, is protected from mazikin (גמי שם).
- Not essential.** While it is ideal to put the mezuzah in the tefach adjacent to the outside, it is not essential. Thus, a mezuzah is kosher even if it was not affixed in the tefach adjacent to the outside (טור רפ"ט ובי"ש שם, רמ"א רפ"ט ס"ב, מקדש מעט רפ"ט אות ט' ואות כ"ח).

Inner Doorframe within a Wider Doorframe

- House's "doorframe" plus actual doorframe.** It is common to have a wide, stone entryway as part of a house's structure with another wood or metal smaller doorframe that actually holds the door. In essence, this is a doorframe within a wider doorframe. The mezuzah must go in the door's frame, not on the exterior stone wall – even if this means not putting the mezuzah on the tefach of stone adjacent to the outside – as the main chiyuv of mezuzah is on the smaller doorframe (חובת הדר פ"ח ח"ג סק"ג). (תשובות והנהגות ח"ב סי' תקנ"ב). If it is not possible to put the mezuzah in the smaller doorframe, one can put it in the wider stone doorframe (מנחת יצחק הובא בס' מזוזות מלכים עמ"ב בהערת).



- Door in a doorframe plus another metal door.** It is common for an exit to a courtyard or balcony to have a wide, stone doorframe with a thinner metal one on the edge closer to the inside to reinforce the door. Sometimes there are tracks for a sliding door, with additional thin doorposts on the outer edge to support the screen door. The poskim discuss where to put the mezuzah – on the inner part of the entrance, on the stone wall between the two doors, or on the outer part of the entrance.
- In practice, the mezuzah should l'chatchilah go by the door one encounters first. If the doorframe is not wide or is made of metal, one should carve out a mezuzah-shaped recess and put the mezuzah case in the recess so that it does not interfere with the door closing. If this is too difficult, one can put the mezuzah on the stone wall between the two doors [as in the illustration], as that is also considered a doorframe (פתחי מזוזות מילואים לסי' רפ"ט סק"ז ב'). It is not necessary to put up two mezuzos, one by each door.



Right Side

- The mezuzah must go on the right side as one enters the room (שו"ע סי' רפ"ט ס"ב). Chazal interpret the word "ביתך" to mean "דרך" ["by the way of your entry"] – i.e., the Torah tells us to put up the mezuzah the way a person enters. When entering a doorway, a person first picks up his right foot (גמי מנחות דף ל"ג ע"א).
- Lefty.** Even a left-handed or left-footed person puts his mezuzah on the right side, as we go by the majority of people (רמ"א שם). This is true even if the lefty lives alone and is the only one who uses the doorway (ב"ה, שו"ך סק"ה).
- Put it on the left.** If one put the mezuzah on the left side in a case where there is no machlokes about what is considered the right side, it is posul (שו"ע שם). He must remove it and put it back up on the right side with a new brachah (פתחי מזוזות סי' רפ"ט סק"ח).

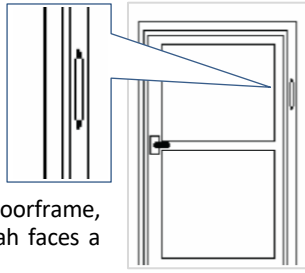
No Room in the Doorway's Space

Examples

- In many cases, it is hard to put the mezuzah in the doorway's space. The poskim discuss in various circumstances how one can fulfill the mitzvah properly. We will now cite several examples, followed by the solutions.
- Narrow doorway.** If a doorframe is only as thick as the door itself, i.e., the door takes up the whole width of the frame, there is no more room to put the mezuzah in the doorway's space.
- Glass door.** Similarly, when there is a glass door fixed within a large window, e.g., when a store's entire front wall is made of glass with a door in the middle attached with special hinges, the lintel and doorposts constituting the doorframe are themselves made of the window glass. Their thickness is exactly the same as the rest of the glass's thickness and it is impossible to put a mezuzah in that space.
- Swinging door.** It is also common for a swinging door that opens both inward and outward to have a thickness identical to the thickness of the frame.
- House door.** Recently, there are people who put modern style doors to the main entrance of their houses. The door ends directly at the sides of the door and is perfectly aligned. This is just like the glass door (above, 15), which lines up perfectly with the glass at its sides. Here too, there is no room in the doorway for a mezuzah.

Putting Up a Mezuzah Outside a Doorway's Space

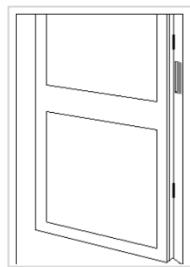
18. The poskim argue whether one can put a mezuzah off to the side of a doorway's space. I.e., instead of having the front of the mezuzah in the doorway, facing the opposite side of the doorframe, can one put the mezuzah on the outer end of the doorframe, such that the front of the mezuzah faces a person entering the doorway?



19. Some hold one may put a mezuzah at the side of the doorway not within its space (טור רפט, ט"ז סק"ג, נשמת אדם כלל טו אות א, ש"ך בדעת רמ"א).
20. However, most poskim hold one is not yotzei if the mezuzah is next to the doorway rather than within its space (רמב"ם פ"ה מזוזה ה"ח, גימורק"י, ב"י, יד הקטנה פ"ג ס"א, הש"ך בנקה"כ). This is the ruling of the Mechaber (ש"ע סי' רפ"ט ס"ב) and how many poskim interpret the Rama (לבוש, דרך החיים בסידורו, מקדש מעט סק"ט, גידולי הקדש סק"ד, יעב"ץ) (בסידורו, שלחן גבוה, קונטרס המזוזה סק"י).

21. **In practice.** Since it is a machlokes and many poskim hold one is not yotzei, one should search for other ways to fulfill the mitzvah properly, as will be explained. However, if there is no other choice whatsoever, one can put the mezuzah next to the doorway's space to at least fulfill the mitzvah according to one opinion. It should go on the actual wood doorframe, not the wall past the doorframe (ש"ת שבט הלוי ח"ג סי' קנ"א). It should also go within a tefach of the doorframe (חיי אדם). One should not make a brachah when putting it up since most poskim say one is not yotzei this way (ישועות חכמה) (בעל מסגרת השלחן על קיצושי"ע סי' י"א).

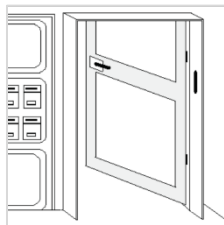
22. **Carving into the frame.** In the above scenarios, there are some ways to put up a mezuzah properly. One way, and the best option, is to carve out a recess in the frame that is the same shape and size of the mezuzah [see illustration]. This way, the mezuzah can be set in the frame itself without preventing the door from closing. It is also properly within the doorway's space and kosher according to all poskim.



23. For an aluminum frame, one will have to use a circular saw or the like. Sometimes it will require hiring a professional. People avoid doing this since hiring a professional for the task involves money and effort. However, just as one would hire a professional for any home repair, sometimes even a very minor one, or to fix the alarm system for protection, it is certainly worthwhile to put in a bit of effort to fulfill the mitzvah of mezuzah properly, as the mezuzah is the home's real protection...

24. As far as a glass door, when ordering the door in the first place, one should also instruct the company to cut the glass, leaving room to put up a mezuzah. Just as they cut the glass to put in the hinges that support the door, they can also cut it to hold a mezuzah case. Just as interior designers take every small detail into account, they can also ensure from the outset that the plans accommodate places for mezuzos.

25. **Adding an exterior doorframe.** Some suggest an additional option of adding an exterior doorframe, e.g., by putting narrow rods outside the door along the length of the door's two sides and another one above to serve as a lintel. Then, one should put a mezuzah in the additional doorway's space (חובת הדר פ"ט סק"ב). B'dieved, one can add a rod only on the right side along the whole length of the door (שם). However, one cannot just add a small piece of wood the size of a mezuzah case and attach the mezuzah to it – that does not help whatsoever.



Putting the Mezuzah on the Upper Third

Beginning of the Upper Third

26. The Gemara (מנחות דף ל"ג ע"ב) says that the mitzvah is to put the mezuzah up at the beginning of the upper third of the doorframe. I.e., if the doorway is, say, 240 cm high, the upper third is the top 80 cm. Putting the mezuzah at the beginning of the upper third would mean having its base 80 cm below the top of the doorway.

27. Some Rishonim hold that the whole upper third of the doorway, up until a tefach from the top, – not just the bottom section – is kosher l'chatchilah (הר"ף, הרא"ש, ש"ך בנקה"כ, ספר פסקי הגר"א, תשובה) (מאהבה ח"ג בהע"ל ליי"ד). Others hold l'chatchilah the mitzvah is to put up the mezuzah at the beginning of the upper third, as described above (רמב"ם, ב"י); the Mechaber and Rama rule this way (ש"ע סי' רפ"ט ס"ב, וג"פ ע"פ האריז"ל).

Below the Upper Third

28. Some hold that if the mezuzah is below the upper third and it is lower than one's shoulders, it is kosher b'dieved (רא"ש, טור). However, most poskim hold one is not even yotzei b'dieved. Thus, it should be taken down and put back up on the upper third (ש"ע). A new brachah should not be said since some hold it is kosher b'dieved.

29. **Measure the doorpost.** Since putting the mezuzah below the upper third invalidates it, one should measure the height of the doorpost and put the mezuzah at exactly the right spot. Do not rely on an estimation, as this can easily lead to being off by a few centimeters and putting it up in a way that it is posul.

Tall Door

30. The poskim discuss where to put a mezuzah for a very tall door, where the upper third is well above a person's height, e.g., a door 270 cm or taller. The Gemara [Bavli] and Rishonim do not specifically differentiate, implying they hold a mezuzah should go on the upper third even in a tall doorway, where it will be out of reach and out of sight.

31. **Yerushalmi.** However, the Yerushalmi says it should be put at an average person's shoulder height, i.e., 140 cm, not on the upper third (תוס' מנחות שם ד"ה ומא, מרדכי בהלק"ט סי' תתקס"א, ראב"ד). Some rule like the Bavli (גיידולי הקדש, ש"ת מהרש"ם ח"ג סי' ר"ט) (ש"ך סק"ד, ט"ז סק"ג, חובת הדר פ"ח אות א) (ש"ך סק"ד, ט"ז סק"ג, חובת הדר פ"ח אות א).

Straight or at an Angle?

Orientation of the Mezuzah

32. The Rishonim argue whether it is more respectful for a mezuzah, as well as other holy objects, e.g., a sefer Torah, to lie flat or to stand upright.

33. **Rabbeinu Tam.** Rabbeinu Tam holds that it is disrespectful for a mezuzah to be vertical; it is more respectful for it to be horizontal. Thus, one must put a mezuzah horizontally across the width of the doorpost (תוס' מנחות דף ל"ג ע"א ד"ה הא, טור בשם ר"ת).

34. **Rashi.** However, Rashi holds a mezuzah must go vertically along the length of the doorpost. He holds it is posul if it is put up horizontally, as *that* is disrespectful.

35. **Mechaber.** The Mechaber rules like Rashi, that the mezuzah should go upright, with its length running along the doorpost's length (ש"ע סי' רפ"ט ס"ו). This is the minhag of Sephardim [and some Ashkenazim (ע"פ הגר"א)]. That is why Sephardim read from the sefer Torah while it stands upright, and it also goes upright in the aron.

36. **Rama.** The Rama writes that scrupulous people satisfy both opinions by putting the mezuzah diagonally; this is the minhag of most Ashkenazim (רמ"א שם). The main thing according to Rashi is that it should not be horizontal, and according to Rabbeinu Tam, that it should not be vertical. Thus, when it is diagonal, one satisfies both opinions since it is neither vertical nor horizontal (חובת הדר פ"ט) (סק"כ). Thus, Ashkenazi sifrei Torah also sit diagonally in the aron – they stand on the two atzei chaim and lean on the back of the aron. The bimah is also slightly slanted to satisfy both opinions.

37. **Cannot go diagonally.** If there is no room to put a mezuzah diagonally, e.g., the doorposts are too narrow (הקטנה פ"ג אות ט"ז) (הובא בפתח"ת סק"ט) or one wants to fulfill the halacha that the whole mezuzah should be in the tefach adjacent to the entrance (above, 5), one can put it vertically. Even according to the Rama, that is the main halacha, just it is best to satisfy both opinions where possible.

38. **Top pointed inward.** When putting up a mezuzah diagonally, the top of the mezuzah should face inward and the bottom should face outward (רמ"א שם). If one did the opposite, he is yotzei (הלכה למשה ס"ק סי' ט"ו) (סק"א), but it is proper to fix it without a brachah (הלכה למשה ס"ק סי' ט"ו).

Put It Upside Down

39. If one accidentally put up the mezuzah upside down, i.e., with the top facing down, it is posul (ל"ב ק"א). One must put it back up with a brachah. Thus, when putting up a mezuzah, one should ensure he puts the mezuzah in its tube in the proper direction; it is easy to put it in the wrong way since one does not always see the Name "ש-ד-ו" on the outside if it is wrapped in plastic.