



A collection of Torah thoughts produced by Kollel Menachem

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HAKHEL IN THE PARSHA

After reading from the beginning of Devarim to Shema Yisrael, the king would skip to read the second passage of the Shema - Vehaya Im Shamo'a - in Parshas Eikev.

The passages read at Hakhel were designated as part of the objective of Hakhel, to inspire the people in the fear of Heaven and the observance of the Mitzvos.

Vehaya Im Shamo'a represents Kabbolas Ol Mitzvos - acceptance of the yoke of Mitzvos. It contains rewards for the observance of the Mitzvos and a warning for failing to observe the Mitzvos and being seduced to go astray after one's heart to serve other gods.

Although not read at Hakhel, Parshas Eikev also contains the Parsha referred to as Parshas Hayirah - the Parsha of fear of Heaven.

Moshe calls out to Bnei Yisroel "Now Yisrael, what does Hashem your G-d ask of you? Only that you fear Hashem your G-d, to go in all of His ways, to love Him, to serve Hashem your G-d with all of your heart and all of your soul".

These words also echo the purpose of Hakhel which was "in order... to fear Hashem your G-d and to guard to observe all of the words of this Torah".



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The World Needs a Mezuzah

One of the Mitzvos in the second paragraph of the Shema in Parshas Eikev, is the Mitzvah of Mezuzah.

The Mitzvah of Mezuzah is to write the two Parshios of Shema and Vehaya (which both contain the Mitzvah of Mezuzah) and to affix them to the doorposts of our houses and gates.

Whilst we ultimately keep every Mitzvah because it is the Will of Hashem, there are specific Segulos and lessons that are associated with different Mitzvos.

The Tur writes that the Mezuzah, which contains the declaration of Hashem's oneness (Shema) reminds us constantly of Hashem's oneness as we leave and enter our homes. This instils awe of Hashem in our hearts so that we will not come to sin.

The Mezuzah also acts as a protective force. Our sages teach that in this regard, Hashem acts unlike an earthly king. The king lives in his palace, with servants to stand outside and guard him. But you, says Hashem, sleep peacefully in your beds while He stands guard outside.

The Ariza"l connects this to the name of Hashem ש-ד-י that is written on the outside of the Mezuzah scroll which forms an acronym for **שומר דלתות ישראל**, the Guardian of the doors of Yisroel.

These two ideas go hand-in-hand. As a symbol of Hashem's oneness, the Mezuzah designates the home and everything in it, as belonging to Hashem. This is what brings about Hashem's Shemira over the home, its contents and its inhabitants.

In a macro sense, the house represents the world. Through our Avodah in making a Dirah Betachtonim, the Jewish people serve as the Mezuzah for the world; revealing the oneness of Hashem and showing how the entire world and everything within it belongs to Hashem. This Avodah, like the Mezuzah on our doors,

brings Shemira to the entire world.

Chassidus teaches that the word **מְזוּזָה** contains the words **זו** and **זה**. Both words mean 'this', but **זו** is in the feminine form and **זה** is in the masculine form. The Mezuzah therefore represents the union of male and female. In the cosmic sense, this refers to the union between Hashem and the Jewish people.

The feminine **זו** refers to the Jewish people, as alluded to in the Posuk **עַם יְיָ יִצְרַתִּי לִי** "this nation I have created for Myself". The masculine **זה** refers to Hashem, as alluded to in the Posuk **יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֵלֵינוּ** "this is my G-d and I shall glorify Him".

In the male-female dynamic, the feminine serves as the **Mekabel** - the receiver. This refers to **Kabbolas Ol**, our surrender to Hashem to accept and follow His will completely and unconditionally. The **נ** at the beginning of the word alludes to the Torah which was given over 40 days.

מְזוּזָה is also made up of the words **זו מות** meaning to move death away. Hashem is the source of life. When we connect ourselves to Him through our **Kabbolas Ol** and the study of Torah, this pushes away negativity and death. This is the protection of the Mezuzah.

The Rebbe launched **Mivtza Mezuzah**, to ensure that every Jewish home has Mezuzos affixed to its doors. It is an opportune time to strengthen our efforts and activities in this regards.

In a broader sense, we need to be the Mezuzah for humanity and the world at large. In these times, we need to strengthen our connection to Hashem and our efforts to reveal the presence and oneness of Hashem in the world around us and to those we come in contact with. In this merit, may Hashem cast His shield of protection over the Jewish people and the entire world, so that we can live in peace and tranquillity.

- the Ram"o does not mean that there is a legal obligation to pay, but there is an ethical obligation.
- 19. Ritva writes that if the new tenant refuses to pay, one may remove the Mezuzos.
- 20. See Bach 291:2 quoting Rabbeinu Manoach
- 21. Minchas Yitzchok 5:110, Chovas Hadar 1:12, Shevet Halevi 2:159, Yabia Omer 3:18, Be'er Moshe 3:181. It may be preferable to have the Mehudar Mezuzos checked when taking them down (and putting up the less Mehudar Mezuzos) as this makes removing them less of a concern.
- 22. Chazon Ish, Rav Chaim of Brisk
- 23. In this case they are obligated to return the Mezuzos – Lehoros Noson 6:126
- 24. i.e. they are obligated to remove them – Sheilas Yaavetz 2:121
- 25. Braisa ibid
- 26. Nimukei Yosef
- 27. Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah 291:2 based on the Braisa Bava Metzia 102a
- 28. Shitah Mekubetzes quoting Rabbeinu Yonason
- 29. Bava Metzia 102a. Technically one does not even need to put the Mezuzah up on another door, however it is still praiseworthy to do so.
- 30. Teshuvos Chadashos 123b
- 31. Yoreh Deah 291:2
- 32. Yoreh Deah 291:6

Beis Hamikdash Thoughts

Taking Down a Mezuzah

Rabbi Yonason Johnson

At the end of Hilchos Mezuzah, the Shulchan Aruch¹ rules that when one leaves the home that they are renting, they should not take down the Mezuzos.

This ruling is based on a Braisa in Mesechta Bava Metziah². The Braisa concludes with an account of someone who removed their Mezuzos when they left their home and their wife and children passed away prematurely R"l³. The Rif quotes the Braisa in full as Halaacha, including the story. It is understood that the story is teaching that removing Mezuzos is a matter of Sakanah⁴.

Some⁵ explain that the reason the Mezuzos should not be taken down was due to a concern that the second tenant may be lax in putting up Mezuzos. It is questionable why this reason would result in such serious repercussions.

The Poskim⁶ write that one may not take the Mezuzos down, even if they stipulated that they intended to do so at the time they put the Mezuzos up. One may also not ask a non-Jew or child to take down the Mezuzos⁷.

What if they will be put up elsewhere?

Some of the Geonim, including Rav Hai⁸ and Rav Acha⁹, are of the opinion that if the Mezuzos will be immediately placed on a new dwelling, they may be removed without concern. This is also the opinion of one answer in Tosfos¹⁰. In their view, the issue is that removing the Mezuzah is disrespectful to the Mezuzah. If it will be placed on another door, the concern will no longer apply.

Their view is not generally followed, since it pertains to a matter of Sakanah¹¹ and we follow the opinion that the Mezuzos may not be taken down even if they will be put up elsewhere immediately¹².

The Nimukei Yosef quoting Ritva, explains why this is different to Tzitzis, which may be untied from one garment and placed in another garment¹³. The Mezuzah causes the Shechina to rest in the house and therefore it should not be removed. Tosfos¹⁴, in the second answer, writes that the Mezuzah is different because it protects from Mazikin – harmful forces¹⁵.

The Birkei Yosef¹⁶ rules that in a Shaas Hadechak, where one will be moving into a new dwelling and will be unable to procure Mezuzos in any other way, the opinion of the Geonim may be relied upon.

Where the new tenant is ready to put up their own Mezuzos immediately, the Birkei Yosef writes that the concerns would not apply. Since they will go up immediately as the old ones are removed, there is no concern of Mazikin entering the house and there is no concern of the house being left without Mezuzos. Nonetheless, he concludes that we apply the dictum Lo Pelug and are stringent even if the reasons do not apply.

Does the new tenant have to pay?

Chochmas Manoach writes that since this is the established Halacha and practise, it is as though it was stipulated that the first tenant would leave the Mezuzos in place. Therefore, the second tenant is not obligated to pay for them.

The Ram"o¹⁷ writes that if one is Makpid on the value of the Mezuzos, the new tenant is required to pay for them^{18, 19}. Based on the reason that the Mezuzos are left up to protect the new tenant, it would be logical that they should pay for the Mezuzos²⁰.

If one has expensive, Mehudar Mezuzos, most Poskim²¹ allow one to substitute them with less Mehudar Mezuzos which they will leave up when moving out. A minority of Poskim²² object to this as it is a Haarama (trick) and especially as there is an issue of Sakana.

The concern only applies to the Mezuzah scroll itself. One may switch the Mezuzah cases without concern in order to put it up elsewhere.

If the new tenant wants to put up their own Mezuzos, they may certainly take down the original Mezuzos and return the old Mezuzos to the previous tenant²³.

If the new tenant is a non-Jew

If one is renting from a non-Jew, they should²⁴ remove the Mezuzos when leaving the house²⁵. This applies even if in most cases the house will be leased to another Jew²⁶.

Similarly, even if the house is owned by a Jew, if the new tenant is not Jewish, the Mezuzos

should be taken down²⁷. If the owner is Jewish and one knows that the new tenant will be Jewish, they must leave the Mezuzos up.

The reason for this is because the Mezuzos may come to be mistreated and disrespected in the hands of a non-Jew. Alternatively, seeing the Mezuzah on the door may lead a Jew to think that the owner is a Jew and this may bring them to harm²⁸. In these cases the Sakanah does not apply²⁹.

What if the non-Jew asks that the Mezuzos be left up and it will cause Eivah (ire) if we do not comply? There is a dispute as to whether one may give a Mezuzah to a non-Jew (who is trusted to respect it). The Mahar"i³⁰ rules that they may not be given a Mezuzah even if there will be Eivah. The Ram"o³¹ rules leniently.

The Birkei Yosef³² takes a middle position. Whilst one may not actively give a Mezuzah to a non-Jew to avoid Eivah, the Mezuzos that are already up may be left in place to avoid Eivah, as this would be a passive manner (שב ואל תעשה).

One may remove Mezuzos to have them checked.

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| 1. Yoreh Deah 291:2 | 13. Shabbos 22a |
| 2. 102a | 14. Shabbos 22a רב ה"ר ד"ה |
| 3. Some explain that this is Middah Kneged Middah because they were not concerned about bringing harm to the family of the new residents – Sefer Haeshkol | 15. Removing the Mezuzos would be considered bringing harm to the new tenant - Bach |
| 4. Quoted in the name of Sefer Chassidim | 16. Siman 291. See Pischei Teshuvah |
| 5. Birkei Yosef. This reason is not found in the Rishonim | 17. Quoting the Beis Yosef in the name of Rabbeinu Manoach. Also the ruling of the Levush. |
| 6. Shu"t Pe'as Sadecha Siman 131 | 18. In Rabbeinu Manoach and Darkei Moshe, it seems that it is on-lypreferable that the new tenant pay for the Mezuzos, but they cannot be forced to. See Birkei Yosef who explains that the Ram"o is following the Sheiltos and Rabbeinu Yonason who imply that the second tenant is obliged to pay. Others explain that |
| 7. Halacha Lemoshe Seif Katan 189 | |
| 8. Quoted by Ritva Chiddushim on Bava Metziah | |
| 9. Sheiltos Shelach | |
| 10. Shabbos 22a רב ה"ר ד"ה | |
| 11. Birkei Yosef Yoreh Deah 291:3 | |
| 12. Ritva, Agudah | |