

THE MEZUZAH HANDBOOK

By Rabbi Aaron Wolf

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Cleveland, Ohio

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FORWARD

It is with awesome gratitude that the author wishes to thank the Al-mighty who has granted him the z'chus to publish this handbook. He hopes that it will in some small measure contribute to the understanding and fulfillment of this most important mitzvah.

In 1974, the Lubavitcher Rebbe launched a worldwide campaign focusing on increasing the knowledge and practice of mezuzah and tefillin. The Rebbe also encouraged all Jews to have their tefillin and mezuzahs checked by qualified scribes. Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Hecht OB" M spearheaded the city-wide mezuzah and tefillin campaign in the Chicago area, with the help of Mr. Israel Nathan. When Mr. Nathan made aliyah to Israel, Rabbi Aron Wolf became the director of this campaign.

Over the years as director, Rabbi Wolf has visited

literally thousands of homes, helping people purchase their mezuzahs from reliable sources and encouraging them to have them checked regularly. Thanks to his many campaigns and year-round home visits, many Jews have learned about this most important mitzvah and put up mezuzahs, some for the very first time.

As Rabbi Wolf continued in his efforts, he came to the conclusion that most people would appreciate knowing more about the complexities of mezuzahs. Gathering the most-commonly asked questions along with halachic and biblical sources, he consulted with Rabbonim and scribes to form a basic handbook on the laws of mezuzah.

It should be noted that the mitzvah of mezuzah is multifaceted, with many differences of opinion and divergent traditions. The information contained in this handbook follows the general practices of the **majority**, but it behooves the reader to discover what unique traditions he has by consulting his

own authorities, as well. The goal of this handbook is to increase the reader's knowledge of this vital mitzvah, to make him aware of its complexity, and allow the reader to be able to ask informed, educated questions.

Let us hope and pray that through the power of the mitzvah of mezuzah, G-d will guard us physically and spiritually for many, many years with an abundance of nachas and happiness. The enhancement of this mitzvah, as well as other mitzvahs, will, with G-d's help, expedite the coming of Moshiach speedily in our days, Amen.

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CHAPTER 1
Goals
and Objectives
of the
Mezuzah and
Tefillin
Campaign

To Educate Consumers

*in the selection of kosher mezuzahs and
tefillin, as well as the encouragement of their
periodic checking*

When a defective mezuzah is affixed to a doorpost, the mitzvah of mezuzah has not been fulfilled. If there is a flaw in the parshios of a pair of tefillin,

the person wearing them is not performing the mitzvah of tefillin. Because these mitzvos are so important—and because mezuzahs and tefillin represent a significant financial investment—it is vital that the purchasers of these articles be *educated* consumers.

A mezuzah has 713 letters, the tefillin 3,188. Every letter has a number of laws pertaining to its form. In order for mezuzahs or tefillin to be written in accordance with all of the laws, it must thus meet thousands of requirements. If even one of the 713 letters in a mezuzah is missing or shaped incorrectly, the mezuzah is rendered invalid, the Mitzvah is unfulfilled, and the b'racha recited over it is in vain. Even the best scribe is human and subject to error. While some errors may be corrected in accordance with halachic decree, others cannot. Mezuzahs and tefillin, even when written by the most expert of scribes, have many possibilities of being unfit. They must therefore be inspected before being purchased.

Furthermore, mezuzahs and tefillin, like anything else subject to the ravages of time and elements, can deteriorate. It therefore behooves us to inspect our mezuzahs and tefillin from time to time, either for the purpose of determining their fitness or for making preventative corrections. The halacha sets the requirements for periodic inspection of the mezuzah at every 3½ years.

**To Promote and Publicize the
Qualifications of a Scribe**
as Defined by Vaad Mishmeret STaM

Certified scribes:

Safrus—the writing of STaM (**S**efer Torah, **T**efillin & **M**ezuzahs)—is a highly technical skill, one that can be practiced with reliability only by sofrim who have been properly trained and who have mastered the numerous halachic details involved. Two decades ago, the Vaad Mishmeret STaM established a program of certification for sofrim. Only those applicants who meet the Vaad’s strict criteria and

successfully complete required testing are certified.

Since the Halachos of the letters and the process of their writing are many and complex, the scribe must attain full mastery of this section of the law. He must constantly study and review them, since ignorance of even one single halacha may render all of his writing unfit. If the scribe is ignorant of a law relating to the exact form of a letter, it will become apparent upon inspection of his writing. But if he is ignorant of the exact procedure to be used in forming the letters, all of the STaM which he writes are unfit. The saddest thought is that no one will ever know it.

The Campaign emphasizes that the surest indicator of the kashrus of mezuzahs or tefillin is the certification of the sofer who wrote the parshios. Consumers are urged to insist on parshios from **certified sofrim only**. While the absence of such certification does not necessarily mean that a sofer is unqualified, its presence removes all uncertainty.

Without certification, there is always at least the possibility of abuse. In a particularly egregious case, it was discovered that *Arabs* were writing mezuzahs. In another instance, beautifully written mezuzahs were found to have been inscribed by a man who had been trained as a sofer, but was no longer religiously observant. He was writing these mezuzahs in his spare time, on his day off from work—Shabbos!

In many cases, individuals who write mezuzahs assume that they are able to take the responsibility in this holy task while at the same time they fail to recognize that they lack adequate knowledge in all of the laws pertaining to the writing of mezuzahs and tefillin. There are more than 4,600 laws governing the writing of each mezuzah.

Reliable and Trustworthy Scribes

There are many intricate details that may serve to render mezuzahs or tefillin unfit. No person other than the scribe is likely to be aware of these. Every scribe frequently finds himself in a situation where he must render unfit and remove from circulation a product on which he may have worked a full day or two. We must therefore be certain that the scribe is a man possessing the highest level of conscientiousness and integrity, to be assured that he will withstand such a test.

CHAPTER 2

The Scribal Art

**How complex are the laws
pertaining to the actual writing of
mezuzahs or tefillin?**

The Scribal Art:

Ochsavtom means “and you shall write them” (“on the doorposts of your house...”). The Sages explain that this word can be read as two words: *Ochsavtom*, “a perfect script”. The special script in which the mezuzah, like tefillin and a sefer Torah, is written, has been very precisely defined by the

Sages. In the halachic codes the exact form of each letter, from alef to sof, is clearly described. Each letter must be written perfectly in accordance with these laws, for the slightest flaw can render the whole mezuzah or tefillin posul. The letters may not touch each other, but should be separated by at least a hairbreadth space. The space between two words should be the size of a letter yud. If two words are written so closely together that a child learning to read thinks they are one word, the mezuzahs or tefillin are posul. This is also the case if a large space in the middle of a word makes it seem like two words.

The Correct Order 'כסדר'

An important condition which mezuzahs or tefillin must fulfill is that they must be written in the correct order. This means that a mistake found in mezuzahs or tefillin often cannot be put right. The corrected letter would be written after the subsequent text of the mezuzah or tefillin, and would not be in correct order.

If the mistake is found in the last line or two, these words can be erased and then rewritten correctly. The correct order has been preserved. But it is forbidden to erase the Name of G-d. This occurs in the penultimate line, so if any mistake is found in an earlier line, the mezuzahs or tefillin are irredeemably posul and must be buried. Hours of work by the Sofer and parchment-maker have unfortunately gone to waste.

Because of this stringent stipulation, the Sofer is always very careful before writing the Name of G-d and meticulously checks through everything he has written earlier before writing it.

The law of “the correct order” does not apply to a sefer Torah, which therefore can be corrected. In this respect that law concerning writing mezuzahs or tefillin are stricter than that concerning a sefer Torah.

Writing by Erasing 'חק תוכות'

The halacha requires that each letter be written perfectly. It must not be written by erasing. For example, if, in error, the Sofer wrote beis instead of kof, he might feel that by erasing the foot of the beis a kof would remain. This, however, is writing by erasing and the mezuzahs or tefillin are therefore *posul*. The same would apply to an attempt to change a daled into a reysh.

This law also applies if a drop of ink splashes onto a letter. Even if the ink can easily be cleaned away leaving the letter intact the law of writing by erasing may have been contravened.

It is clear from these laws that even if mezuzahs or tefillin appear all right, it may actually be *posul*. It is essential to buy one's mezuzahs or tefillin from a reliable source. A reliable source is best defined, that the seller knows who is the scribe and that the scribe has been certified. **Scribes that are not tested and certified may not be**

aware of the many laws pertaining to mezuzahs or tefillin. As a result, what you're buying may be 100% *possul* even if it looks kosher.

What is the purpose for the crowns 'Tagin' on some of the letters? Are mezuzahs or tefillin kosher without those crowns?

The seven letters, shin, ayin, tess, nun, zayin, gimmel, tzaddy, must have *tagin* (crowns). The crown is made of three little lines, each one often shaped like the letter zayin, extending from the top of the letter. The tagin must be clearly written and may not touch any other letter. Some other letters can also take tagin, but the most important are the seven mentioned above.

The Talmud tells us that when Moses was on Mount Sinai "he found the Holy One binding crowns for the letters". He saw how the great Rabbi of the Mishnah would reveal the profound secrets of the tagin after many generations, Rabbi Akiva. If mezuzahs or tefillin do not have tagin they can be

added later (because the basic form of the letter is already present). An unfortunate fact is that many mezuzahs or tefillin are sold without any tagin, or they may have only a few. Those who write and sell such mezuzahs or tefillin plead that because they are so small there is not enough room to write the tagin. This is like constructing a car without a gas tank in order to save space! If the scribes of today do not have the skill to write tagin in a small mezuzah then it is up to us to ask them to write one of a slightly larger size.

CHAPTER 3

Checking Mezuzahs and Tefillin and Computer Scanning

What is the purpose of checking mezuzahs, and how often must it be done?

Mezuzahs should be checked twice every seven years to see if they have been affected by adverse weather conditions or folding, or if any other defect has occurred. It is preferable to check mezuzahs which are on the outside of a building (i.e. backyard fence or garage) more often, due to their vulnerability to inclement weather. Oftentimes, preventive corrections can be made which could increase the longevity of these mezuzahs

In addition, the infiltration of fraudulent mezuzahs

in the marketplace present further cause for regular checking to determine the authenticity of those mezuzahs.

**Why do many scribes and
Rabbonim encourage computer
scanning of tefillin and mezuzahs?**

The checking of mezuzahs and tefillin has been revolutionized by technological developments over the last several years. Mezuzahs and Parshios can now be scanned by a computer for textual errors. While no sofer, however diligent, is infallible, computer scanning has the advantage that no word or letter will ever be overlooked. Moreover, the computerized database of the Vaad Mishmeret STaM has a record of every mezuzah and every tefillin parsha that was ever scanned into the system. (There were roughly 350,000 mezuzahs and 36,000 sets of tefillin in the computer database by 2003.

Utilization of the computer scanning method has brought serious instances of fraud to light. In one instance, for example, the system identified several mezuzahs as being exactly identical. This is impossible with handwritten parchments. Investigation revealed that the source was merely reproducing mezuzahs on parchment using a raised-ink printing process. In another instance, the system called attention to the fact that previously scanned mezuzahs with missing words or letters had been resubmitted with those errors corrected. Such parshios were thus defective as they were written *she'lo k'sidran*, out of order.

The Mezuzah Campaign raises awareness of the availability of computer-scanned mezuzahs and tefillin, and participants are advised to purchase only mezuzahs or tefillin that are written by certified sofrim, and which are computer-scanned. A computer scanning system is now available and is used to examine all mezuzahs sold and checked through Mezuzah.net.

CHAPTER 4

How and Where to Affix Mezuzahs

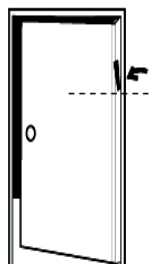
QUESTION:

Where, exactly, is the mezuzah to be mounted?

ANSWER:

The mezuzah is placed on the right hand side of the door as you enter. The mezuzah should be affixed on a slight angle with the top of the mezuzah toward the inside of the room and the bottom pointed toward the outside (Ashkenazic custom).

It should be affixed in the lower part of the upper-third of the doorpost. In most homes, the doors are approximately 78 inches high. Hence, the lowest permissible height should not exceed twenty six inches from the top.



The Mezuzahs should **not** be placed **lower** than the upper third, nor should it be placed within four inches from the lintel.

One is obligated to attach a mezuzah to a doorway only when the doorway has two doorposts and a lintel connecting the doorposts. If these conditions do not exist, an observant Rabbi should be consulted to determine whether or not that entryway may still require a mezuzah.

QUESTION:

What if my doorpost is very high or very low?

ANSWER:

If your door is much higher than 78 inches (90 inches or higher), many Rabbonim would instruct you to affix the mezuzah according to shoulder height, even if the shoulder-height is lower than the upper third of the doorway.

If the doorpost is very low, an observant Rabbi should be consulted in order to determine where

the mezuzahs should be mounted.

QUESTION:

Can I mount the mezuzah lower than the upper third of the doorpost, in order to enable my children to reach and kiss the Mezuzah?

ANSWER:

No.

QUESTION:

If a doorway can be utilized as an entrance from either side, how do I then determine what is considered the right (as opposed to left) side?

What if I'm not sure if all of my mezuzahs are affixed properly?

ANSWER:

The laws defining the terms 'entrance' and 'exit' are multifarious and complex. It is therefore advisable to have a reliable observant Rabbi visit your home to make that determination.

QUESTION:

What if it is physically impossible to affix the

mezuzah on the doorpost itself (*i.e.*, there is no space on the doorpost, or a swinging door is installed which interferes with the mezuzah)?

ANSWER:

In extenuating circumstances, such as the aforementioned examples, it would be preferred to carve out a groove, less than a handbreadth deep, into the doorpost and place the mezuzah into the groove.

If that is not possible, then it would be permissible to affix the mezuzah behind the door provided it was placed on the doorpost under the lintel.

This halacha also applies if one is genuinely concerned that the mezuzah will be stolen or defaced were it to be mounted on the actual doorpost.

QUESTION:

If there is a stationary chest or the like in the doorway on the right side, where should the

mezuzah be affixed?

ANSWER:

The mezuzah should be affixed on the side of the chest, provided the chest is ten handbreadths high (approximately 32 inches). If the chest is lower than ten handbreadths high or if the mezuzah will not be secure in that position, then the mezuzah should be attached to the right doorpost.

QUESTION:

Should I always affix my mezuzah at the horizontal center of my doorpost?

ANSWER:

No. The mezuzah should be mounted on the outermost handbreadth (approximately 3.25 inches) from the outside of the doorpost. If the doorpost or archway is very wide, caution should be exercised *not* to mount the mezuzah in the center of the doorway. Use the above measurement to determine the proper placement of the mezuzah.

However, when there is a protrusion along the

height of the doorpost, some Rabbonim would advise you to affix the mezuzah on the protrusion.

QUESTION:

Am I obligated to use nails or screws to mount the mezuzahs?

ANSWER:

No. You may, also use glue or mounting tape. For this purpose, regular scotch tape or masking tape is not permitted.

QUESTION:

What must I do with old mezuzah cases, old mezuzah wrappings or nails previously used for mezuzahs?

ANSWER:

Nails, screws and tape (that were used for mezuzahs) may be discarded. However, mezuzah cases and mezuzah wrappings should be treated as “SHAIMOS”, and require interment after their use.

QUESTION:

Is there a problem with clear lucite cases?

ANSWER:

It depends where the mezuzah will be placed. You may not use a lucite case:

- If it faces a bathroom.
- On a doorpost or archway **inside** a bedroom door.
- On any doorpost or archway of a room where babies' diapers are changed.
- In a laundry room

QUESTION:

Do all Mezuzahs have to be returned to the same doorpost?

ANSWER:

It is Halachically preferred to have all of the mezuzahs returned to their original doorposts or at least to the same type of entrance way (i.e. from one bedroom door to another, or from one archway to another).

A practical suggestion for anyone removing his or

her mezuzahs is to label each mezuzah case with a number (using masking tape or the like). The identical number is then taped on the doorpost itself. You must remember to request the scribe to replace all mezuzahs in their original cases. When the mezuzahs have to be remounted, match the numbers from your cases to the numbers on the doorposts.

QUESTION:

Is there a specific way of inserting the mezuzah in the case?

ANSWER:

Yes, make certain that the scroll is inserted in the proper position. The “-ו-ג-ו” is facing down.

If necessary, tape should be used to keep the scroll in the exact position.

QUESTION:

Who may affix mezuzahs on my behalf?

ANSWER:

Any Jew above the age of Bar/Bas Mitzvah may

affix a mezuzah on your behalf. A non-Jew may not.

BE CAUTIOUS: If you are having your home remodeled, make certain that non-Jewish workers do not remove and remount your mezuzahs.

QUESTION:

May I affix mezuzahs at night?

ANSWER:

Yes.

CHAPTER 5

When to Affix Mezuzahs

QUESTION:

If I am *purchasing* a home, when does my obligation to mount mezuzahs begin?

ANSWER:

Purchased homes require mezuzahs, **with the blessing**, immediately when moving in.

QUESTION:

If I am *renting* a home, when am I obligated to mount the mezuzahs?

ANSWER:

You have a 30-day grace-period (outside of Israel

only). It is also preferred to wait until after the thirty days (the night of the 31st) before reciting the blessing. Therefore, some authorities, will suggest **not** affixing any mezuzahs until the 30-day period is up.

Some have the custom to affix all of the mezuzahs immediately upon occupancy, **without** reciting the blessing. Once the 30-day grace-period has elapsed, one of the mounted mezuzahs (from a room that has a door) should be removed, checked and replaced. That mezuzah may also be replaced with a new or upgraded one. The proper blessing is then recited. Others have the custom of affixing the mezuzahs immediately upon occupancy using tape, and nailing them in on the 31st day. The first mezuzah that is nailed in should be on a room that has a door, and the bracha is recited at that time.

QUESTION:

When do I begin counting the 30 days?

ANSWER:

You should begin counting from the day you move in, or the day that you begin storing items in the house.

CHAPTER 6

Doorways Requiring Mezuzahs with Illustrations

QUESTION:

Which entrances are exempt from mezuzahs?

ANSWER:

- Bathrooms and shower rooms.
- Storage rooms that are less than four cubits long and four cubits wide (approximately 6 1/2 ft. x 6 1/2 ft. or 37 square foot).
- A room with an area of sixteen square cubits, that has one side less than a cubit long. (i.e. 1'x 40')

- Any door that's used only as an Emergency exit.

A small room leading into a larger room (i.e. a foyer) requires a mezuzah. There are other small rooms that may require mezuzahs as well, therefore an observant Rabbi should be consulted to determine whether a mezuzah is required.

QUESTION:

Do I require mezuzahs if my home is being renovated or painted?

ANSWER:

Mezuzahs do not need to be mounted if this will interfere with the construction. However, a practical suggestion would be to use mounting tape to facilitate affixing or removing mezuzahs during construction.

A WORD OF CAUTION:

If you are constructing a door in an archway that has a mezuzah of its own, you must remove the mezuzah before installing the door. After the door

is properly installed, you should remount the Mezuzah with a blessing. Never mount a mezuzah on a doorpost before the doorpost is installed.

QUESTION:

What if I never use that door?

What if the door is blocked by furniture?

ANSWER:

According to the majority of opinions, only unused doors that are sealed closed (doors actually nailed to the door frame) are exempt from mezuzahs. Entrances blocked by furniture or doors that are usually kept locked **require** mezuzahs.

QUESTION:

Do garage doors, boiler rooms, attics, outdoor sheds, or crawl spaces require mezuzahs?

ANSWER:

According to many rabbinical authorities, mezuzahs are required on all garage doors (including garage overhead doors), boiler rooms, outdoor sheds, and even crawl spaces, provided that they comply with the required measurements

(approximately 37 square feet).

At the entrance to a crawl space, the doorposts themselves must be at least 10 handbreadths high (approximately 32 inches) and four handbreadths wide.

An attic also requires a mezuzah unless it has a horizontal doorway.

QUESTION:

How do I measure 37 sq. foot in a boiler room?

ANSWER:

The measurement of 37 square feet should NOT include the space being used by permanently mounted appliances or fixtures (e.g. boilers, cabinets).

QUESTION:

Are Mezuzahs required on doors where refuse is stored?

ANSWER:

No. The same will apply for any room with a strong

odor.

QUESTION:

Am I required to affix a Mezuzah on a door leading to an empty room which is not being used at all?

ANSWER:

Some authorities exempt the placing of a Mezuzah on such rooms.

QUESTION:

What about balconies or sun porches (from upper floors)?

ANSWER:

Balconies and porches require mezuzahs. There is a difference of opinion whether the mezuzah is to be placed on the right side of the door leading into the house, or on the right side of the door leading onto the porch.

QUESTION:

I live in a house with several sliding doors leading into the back yard. Should I affix their

mezuzahs the identical way on all of the sliding doors?

ANSWER:

No. It depends if the sliding door slides from right to left or from left to right.

If it slides from right to left (when facing the inside of your home) then the mezuzah is placed on the extreme right side as you **enter** the home.

If however the door slides from left to right (when facing the inside of your home) then you must affix the mezuzah on the right side of the doorpost, not on the extreme right side of the doorframe.

QUESTION:

I have a gate to the entrance of my backyard. Am I obligated to affix a mezuzah on the doorpost of that gate?

ANSWER:

You are obligated to affix a mezuzah **only** if there is a cross bar on top of that gate.

QUESTION:

Do I need a mezuzah at my workplace?

ANSWER:

Yes. In addition to private places of residence, mezuzahs must also be placed in businesses and stores without a blessing.

If you're working for a non-Jew and you are renting space from him, a mezuzah should be affixed on your office door without a blessing. Some authorities add, that the obligation is only if one eats there as well. However, if you are not renting the space, and there is always a possibility that your office space could be relocated without notice, then you would be exempt from affixing a mezuzah.

QUESTION:

Am I obligated to affix a mezuzah on a room that is shared with another person?

ANSWER:

The opinions vary when sharing with a non-Jew. It is therefore recommended to put up a Mezuzah, provided the non-Jew will not be offended and will

allow you to put it up. If sharing with a Jew, it is an obligation upon each partner/tenant to affix that Mezuzah.

QUESTION:

Is a landlord obligated to put mezuzahs in a building where not all the tenants are Jewish?

ANSWER:

There's no obligation on the rented apartments but there is an obligation on all the common areas as well as the vacant apartments that are used by the landlord.

QUESTION:

I have a live-in maid. Am I required to put a mezuzah on her door?

ANSWER:

Yes, providing that upon your discretion, her room may be changed to another location in the house at any given time.

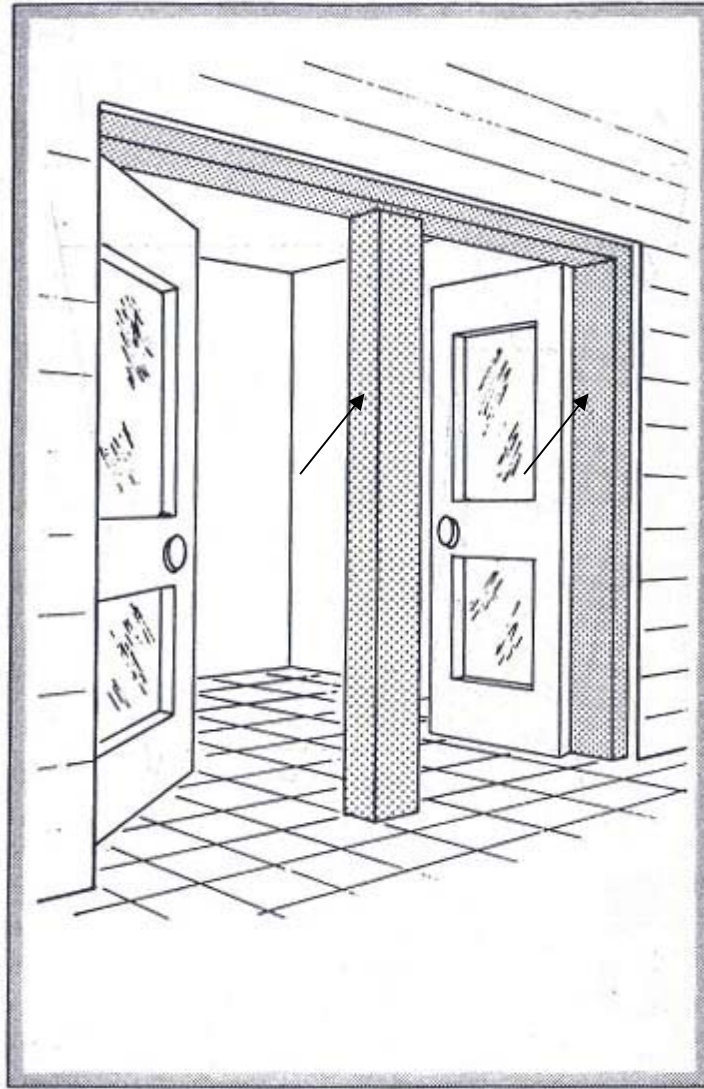
QUESTION:

Does a washing room (outside a lavatory) require a Mezuzah?

ANSWER:

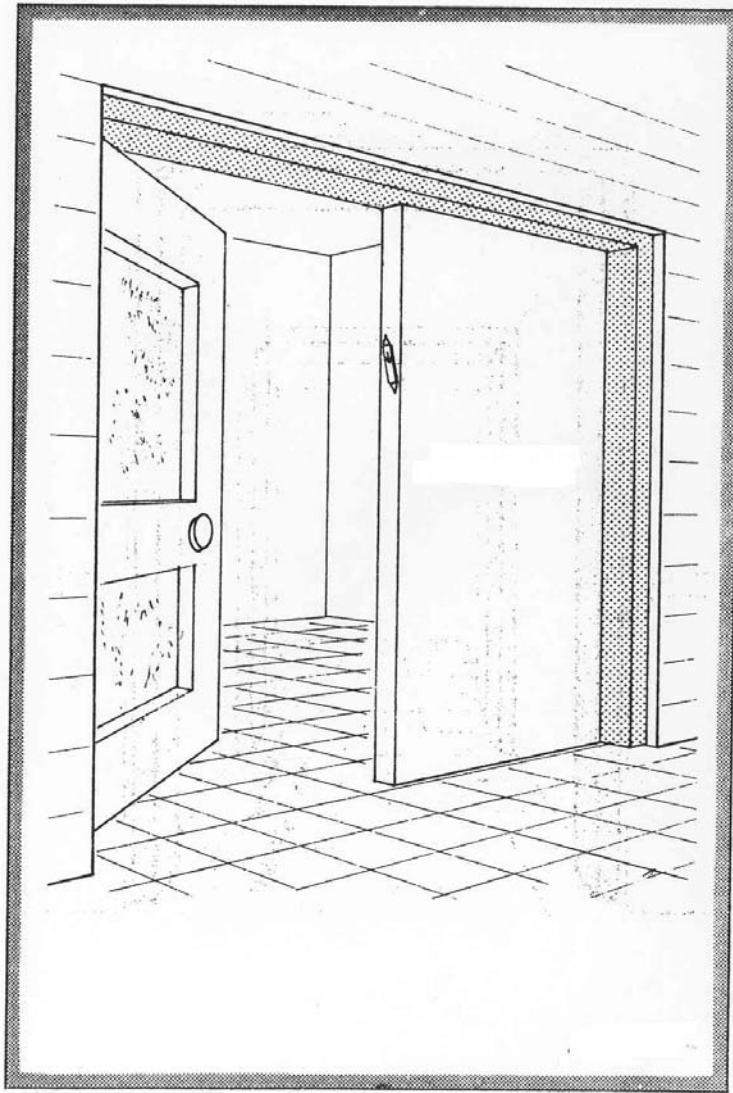
A mezuzah is required providing that the washing room is 37 sq. foot and that there is another door separating the lavatory from the washing area.

Illustration 1



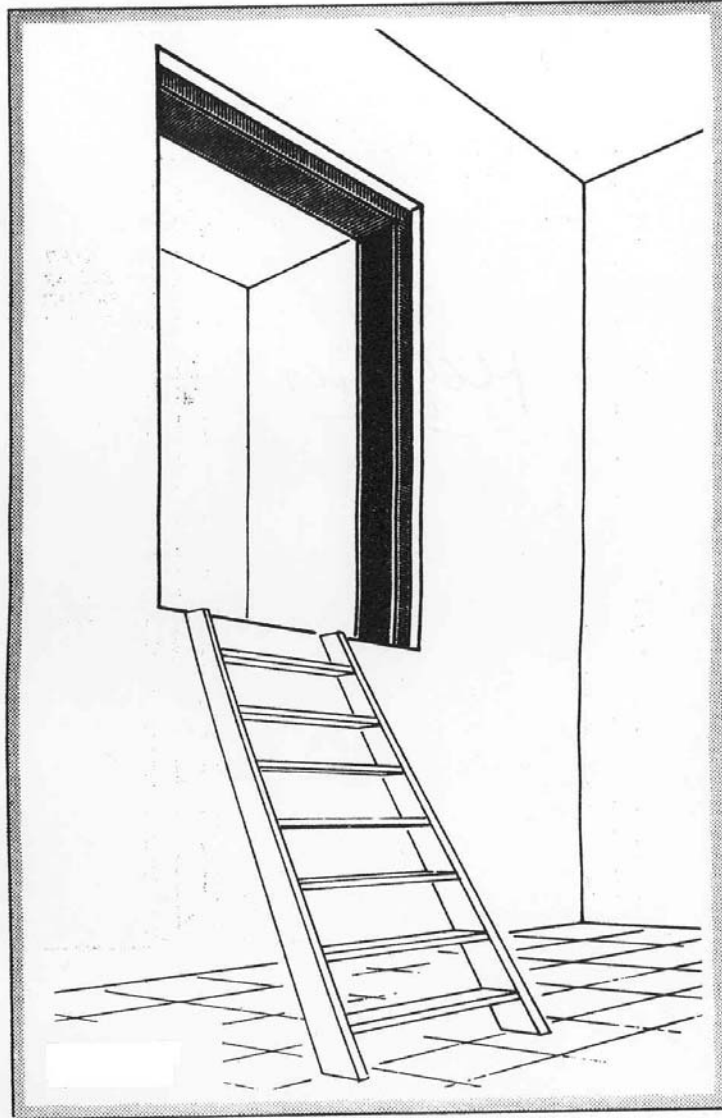
**If center beam is wider than 1 handbreadth,
then 2 Mezuzot are required.**

Illustration 2



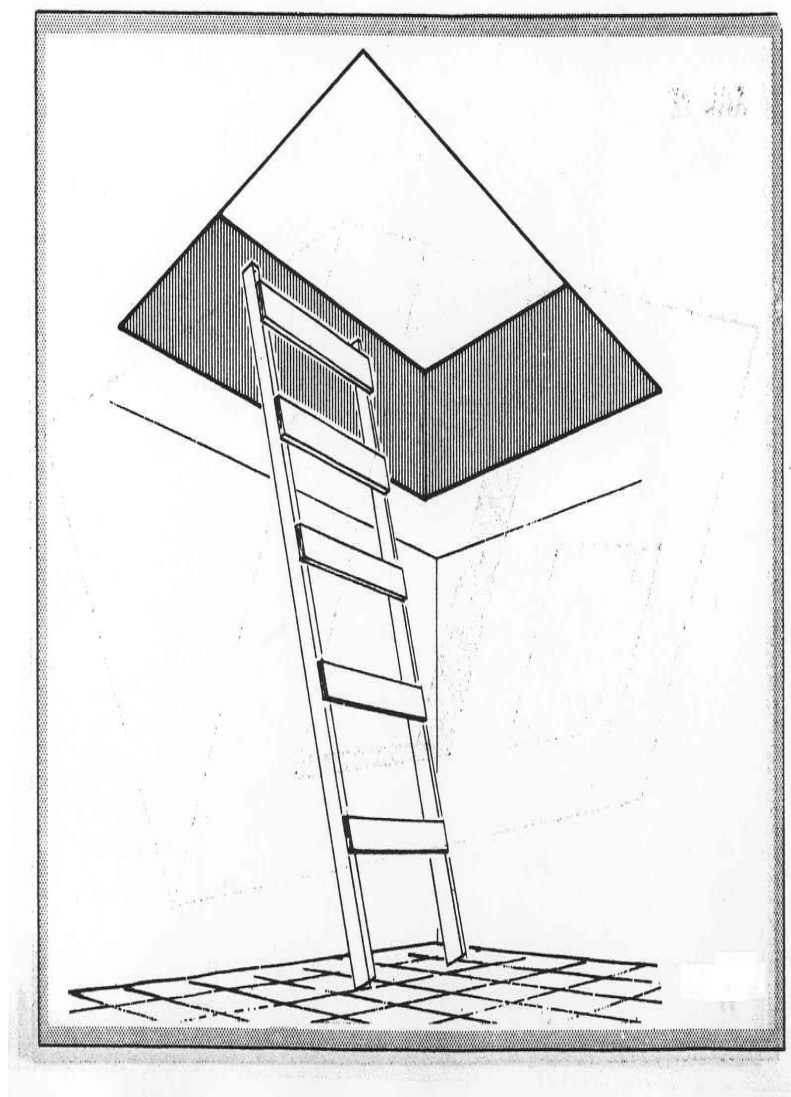
When right side of door is stationary, the Mezuzah is affixed on the right side of the door opening and NOT on the doorpost.

Illustration 4



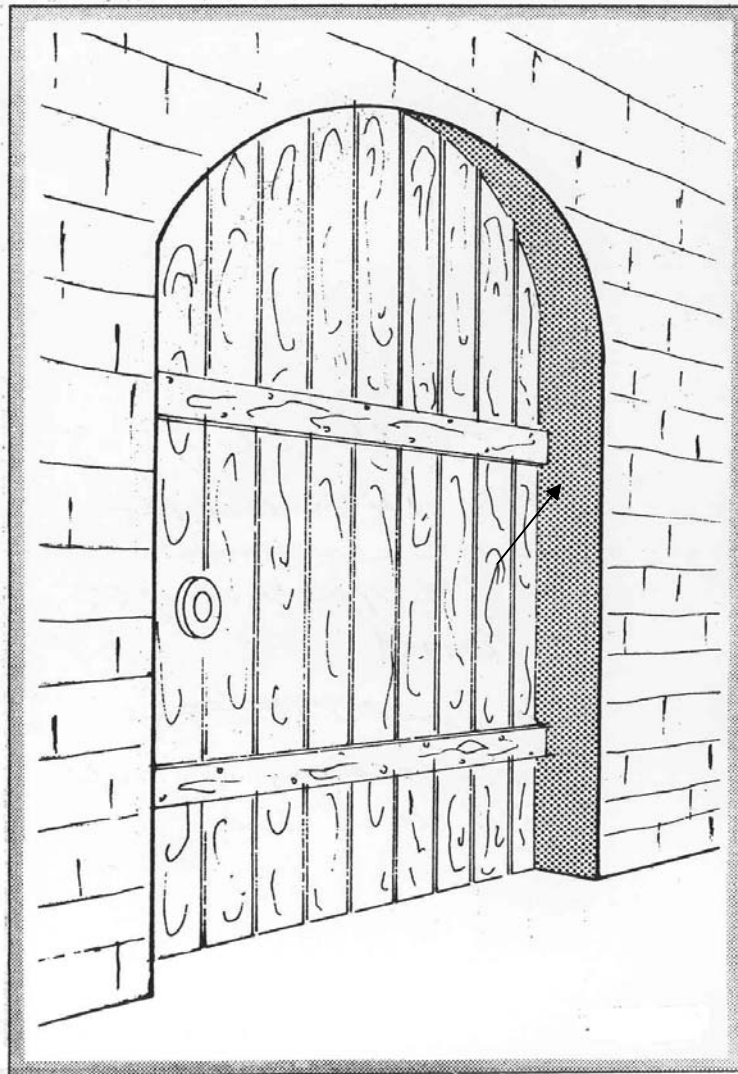
This type of doorway requires a Mezuzah.

Illustration 5



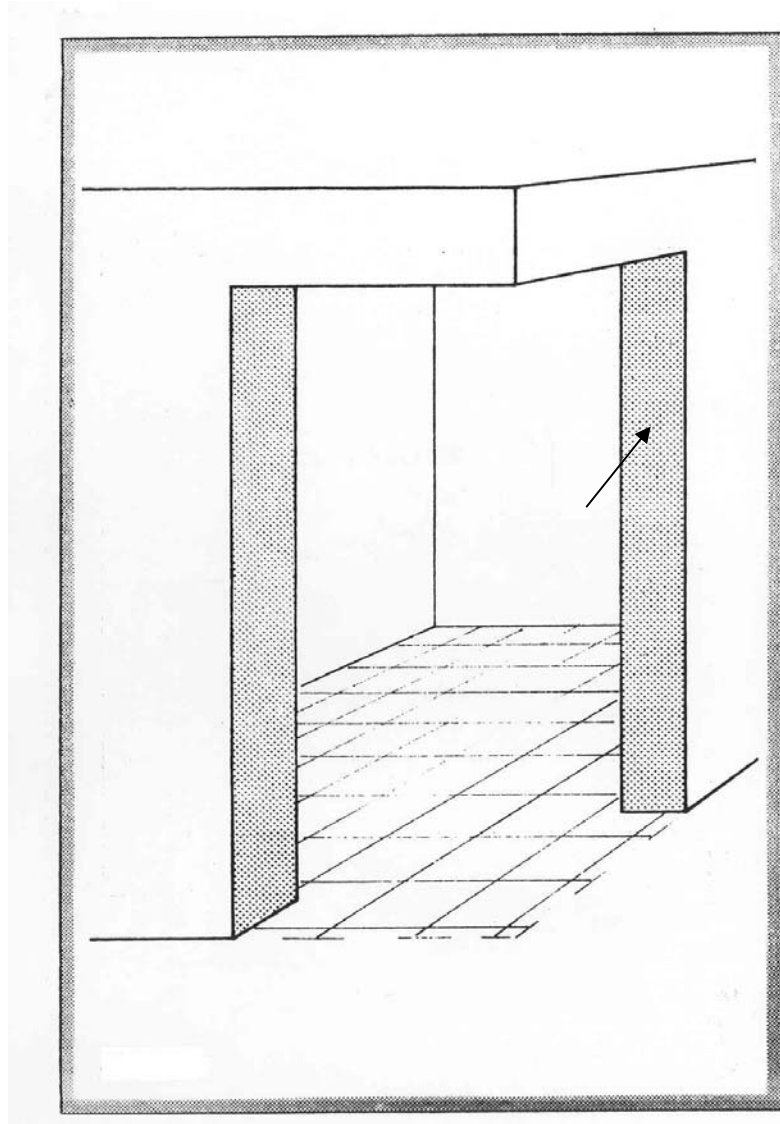
This type of entryway does NOT require a Mezuzah.

Illustration 6



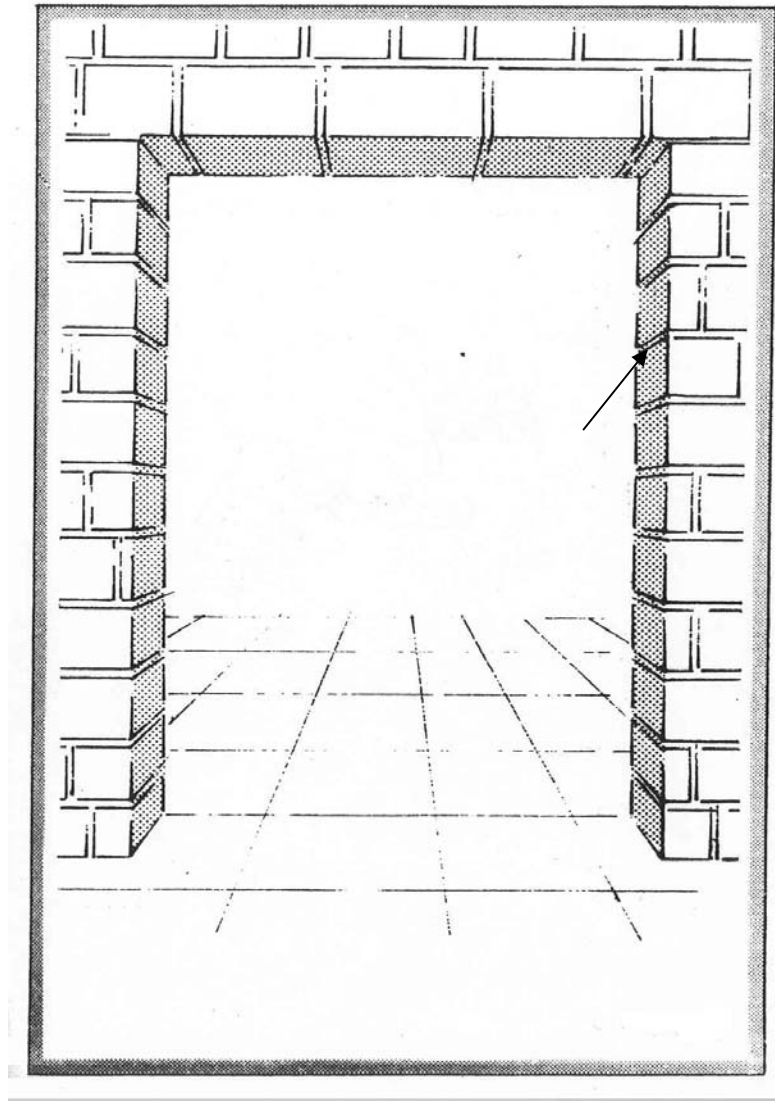
The Mezuzah should be affixed in the lower part of the upper-third of the doorpost. Begin measuring the doorpost after the curve ends.

Illustration 7



This type of doorway requires a Mezuzah.

Illustration 8



This type of entryway requires a Mezuzah.

CHAPTER 7

Mezuzahs

While

Moving

QUESTION:

What if I am in the midst of moving and I temporarily own two homes. Which one requires mezuzahs?

ANSWER:

If you are actually living in both homes, or storing items in both homes, then you are obligated to have mezuzahs in both homes.

QUESTION:

Am I obligated to leave my mezuzahs up after moving?

ANSWER:

When moving to another house or apartment, mezuzahs should not be removed, unless:

- The new tenant is a non-Jew,
- A new tenant did not move in, and there is concern that were the mezuzahs to be left behind, in all probability they would become defaced.

QUESTION:

May I remove my mezuzahs if the new Jewish tenant has his own mezuzahs?

ANSWER:

It is preferred that **the new tenant or owner** should remove your mezuzahs, or he should at least **instruct you** to remove your mezuzahs. This halacha is a very serious matter and should not be treated lightly. Rather, an observant Rabbi should instruct you what to do.

QUESTION:

What if the new owner is Jewish and he wants my mezuzahs, am I obligated to leave all of my mezuzahs behind?

ANSWER:

Yes. You may, however exchange the mezuzahs themselves for less expensive ones, providing that they are 100% kosher. The mezuzah cases may certainly be exchanged for the least expensive mezuzah covers.

You may also demand the new owner or tenant to pay you for the mezuzahs. He will then be obligated to compensate for the mezuzahs at fair market value. If he refuses to pay for them, an observant Rabbi should be contacted. This Halacha is a very serious matter.

QUESTION:

What if I need mezuzahs for a second home while my house is under construction, or a second home used occasionally for vacationing?

ANSWER:

If the second home is a rental, mezuzahs are required only if living there for more than thirty days.

QUESTION:

Does a trailer, mobile home or a boat with living quarters require a mezuzah?

ANSWER:

Yes. If you are renting them, you have the standard grace-period of thirty days and if they were purchased, then mezuzahs should be affixed immediately following the sale. Nevertheless, a brocha should not be recited when affixing these mezuzahs.

QUESTION:

What about a car or a truck?

ANSWER:

Cars and trucks are both exempt from mezuzahs. Some have a custom of placing a mezuzah in the cars' glove department for the purpose of "shmeerah" (protection). It is permissible to do so, but let it be known that this is merely a custom and

it is neither a Torah nor a Rabbinical obligation.

CHAPTER 8

The

Blessing

for

Mezuzahs

QUESTION:

What is the blessing to be recited prior to affixing a mezuzah?

ANSWER:

Prior to affixing a mezuzah upon a doorpost (which has a door), the following blessing should be recited:

ברוך אתה ה' אליהינו מלך העולם
אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו לקבוע מזוזה

Hebrew transliteration: Baruch Ato A-do-nai Elo-

heinu Melech Ho-olom asher kideshonu b'mitzvotov
v'tzivonu likboa mezuzah.

Translation: Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d, King of
the universe, who has sanctified us with His
commandments and commanded us to affix a
mezuzah.

Although many mezuzahs will be affixed, one does
not recite “Likboa **Mezuzot**” (in the plural).

QUESTION:

**How many blessings do I make when I am not
putting up all of the mezuzahs at once?**

ANSWER:

If more than one mezuzah is being affixed at one
time, only one blessing is recited. However, if you
will put them up on separate days, additional
blessings will be required on each day.

One should also refrain from talking until all the
mezuzahs are mounted.

QUESTION:

Does the blessing “Shehecheyanu” need to be recited?

ANSWER:

No. The blessing “Shehecheyanu” is never recited when affixing mezuzahs.

QUESTION:

Are there any doors that require a mezuzah but do not require a blessing?

ANSWER:

Yes.

No blessing is recited when affixing mezuzahs to:

- Entrances of garages and storage rooms
- Doorways or archways that have no actual doors
- A room whose length is less than four cubits, but the total area is at least sixteen cubits square. (i.e. 4 x 9 1/2 feet or 3 x 12 1/2 feet)

In all the aforementioned, the blessing should be recited whilst affixing a mezuzah to an entrance that **has** a door, such as an exterior entryway or

bedroom door. The mezuzahs remaining are afterwards placed on the archways, etc.

Blessings are also not recited on mezuzahs:

- If the rooms are shared with a non-Jew
- At one's workplace

QUESTION:

Do I recite a blessing when remounting the mezuzahs?

ANSWER:

Recite the blessing only if the mezuzahs were off the doorposts for at least one night. If when you're remounting the mezuzahs, you are also adding **new** mezuzahs, it is then preferred to recite the blessing on the new one (providing that it is mounted on a door that requires a blessing).

QUESTION:

What if I drop a mezuzah on the floor, G-d forbid?

ANSWER:

One who drops a mezuzah, G-d forbid, is not

obligated to fast as in the case of a dropped Sefer Torah.

QUESTION:

Am I required to recite a blessing when remounting a mezuzah after it falls off from the doorpost?

ANSWER:

Yes. This applies even in a case when the mezuzah is affixed immediately after it falls down.

HANDBREADTHS/CUBITS

All our measurements in this book follow the opinion of R' Chaim Naeh. According to other opinions the measurements are longer and will therefore be a more lenient opinion in regards to the size of a room that requires a mezuzah.

According to R' Chaim Naeh

10 handbreadths ('TEFACHIM') = $81 \frac{2}{3}$

centimeters. Approximately $31 \frac{1}{2}$ inches

4 cubits square ('AMOT') = 196 square centimeters.

Approximately 6.6 feet x 6.6 feet