



Managing Your Mitzvos

Mezuzah – Part 1:



The Biblical source for the Mitzvah of Mezuzah is found twice in the book of Devarim, 6:9 and 11:20, in the first two paragraphs of the Shema. The Torah states in both paragraphs, “And you shall write [these words] on the entryways of your dwellings and your gates.”

1. Mezuzos are required for **every doorway** in the house that conforms to certain guidelines.
2. Any entryway that leads into a room within a dwelling space may require a Mezuzah. This includes a living room, dining room, kitchen, bedroom, study, playroom, den, foyer, hallway, pantry, storage room, laundry room, stairwell, attached or detached garage, open or closed porch, walk-in closet or freezer, attic, basement, exercise room, boiler room, recreational vehicle, and courtyard.
3. Doorways used for undignified purposes, such as bathrooms, showers, and saunas, do not need Mezuzahs.
4. A room that measures 39.7 square feet requires a Mezuzah. Any room that measures 7.5 X 7.5 feet requires a Mezuzah with a blessing. If the room contains at least 56.25 square feet, but does not have the dimensions of 7.5 X 7.5 feet [different dimensions, like 6 X 10 feet], a Mezuzah is affixed without a blessing.
5. The entryway of a room smaller than a minimum size [39.7 square feet] such as a hallway or foyer requires a Mezuzah on the right side of the entry if the room leads into another room which is at least the minimum size.
6. A Jew must affix Mezuzos to his home, office, and business, whether the properties are owned, rented, or borrowed.
7. If a Jew purchases or rents a property for the purpose of leasing or subleasing it to others, even Jews, he is not obligated to affix Mezuzahs.
8. If one takes a Mezuzah down and puts it back up the same day, before going to sleep, there are differences of opinions as to whether one makes a new blessing. This often happens when getting Mezuzos checked. The best option is to put back one of the Mezuzos on a different entryway than where it was before, thereby requiring a blessing for sure.
9. If a Mezuzah was found clearly unkosher yet reparable, one is required to make a blessing upon reaffixing it, even if only a short time has passed since it was taken down.
10. When putting up more than one Mezuzah at the same time, one should make one blessing upon affixing the first Mezuzah, usually at the front door, and have in mind for the blessing to cover the remaining Mezuzos. He should put up all the Mezuzos right away so as not to have any interruptions between the blessing and the Mitzvah. No speaking is allowed unless it is necessary for the Mitzvah. It is preferable to affix all the Mezuzos that are obligated under Torah law first. [As opposed to those that are rabbinically required. This will be explained in a later class.]
11. The Mezuzah is placed on the right entry post of a room. The right side is determined by the way people normally enter the room from the outside.
12. The Mezuzah is placed within 3.15 inches of the outermost part of the entry post.
13. The Mezuzah is affixed in front of the door. If this is not possible, the Mezuzah is affixed to the doorpost behind the door. If even that is not possible, the Mezuzah is affixed to the front of the doorpost facing outward, within 3.15 inches of the doorpost.
14. The Mezuzah is placed on the lower part of the upper third of the entry post, which is approximately shoulder length. The height is measured from the floor to the bottom of the lintel.
15. Mezuzahs should not be affixed at a lower height on doorways of classrooms or children’s bedrooms to enable the children to kiss them.

16. The Mezuzah should be placed at a slight slant so that the top is directed toward the room one is entering. [Sefardim should place the Mezuzah upright.] If the Mezuzah cannot be put at a slant because the entry post is too narrow, it may be put upright.
17. Mezuzos should be affixed [and reaffixed] by the homeowner or resident, or any appointed household member over Bar Mitzvah. If necessary, the homeowner or resident may appoint a Jewish adult who is not a member of the household to affix the Mezuzos for him, especially if the family will be delayed in affixing them themselves.
18. Women may also affix Mezuzos. However, if there is a household member who is male over Bar Mitzvah it is preferable for him to affix them.
19. Anyone appointed to affix a Mezuzah on behalf of someone else may also make a blessing upon affixing it.
20. Mezuzos may be affixed at any time during the day or night.
21. When affixing the Mezuzah, one should hold the case with the Mezuzah in it against the doorpost, ready to turn the first screw or tap in the first nail. The blessing “Likboa Mezuzah” is made and the case is then firmly affixed. If one is using strong glue or double-sided foam tape to attach the Mezuzah, he should remove the plastic strip from the tape or apply the glue to the back of the cover before making the blessing, so that the case can be affixed as soon as the blessing is completed.
22. A Mezuzah must be affixed to the doorpost on both the top and the bottom. When using double-sided foam tape, one should either use one long strip that extends from the top to the bottom of the Mezuzah case or use two strips, one at the top and one at the bottom.
23. The Mezuzah must be firmly affixed to the doorpost so that it will not fall off if it is lightly pushed, pulled, or bumped into. Therefore, one should not use regular tape to affix a Mezuzah. Velcro and magnets may not be used.
24. The obligation to affix Mezuzos for a homeowner is effective immediately upon occupancy. One who rents a home outside of Israel is not obligated to put up a Mezuzah until thirty days have passed. One begins counting the thirty days from the day he actually moves in.
25. An outgoing resident must leave his Mezuzos behind for the incoming Jewish resident. The new owner of the home must pay the outgoing resident for the Mezuzos he leaves behind, if they belong to him.
26. If a Jew cannot afford Mezuzos for his home or he refuses to buy them, one may purchase them for him and deduct the cost from his *Ma'aser* [charitable tithe] money, even if the recipient can afford them.
27. Mezuzos must be checked twice in seven years.
28. When one moves into a home which already has Mezuzos, he must find out from the previous residents when the Mezuzos were last checked. He is obligated to check them again three and a half years later after they were last checked and not three and a half years after he moves in.
29. If one has a slight suspicion that the Mezuzos the previous residents left behind are problematic, he is not Halachikly obligated to have them checked, but it is worthy to do so.

Before affixing the mezuzah to the doorpost,
the following blessing should be recited:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם

Barukh atah Adonai, Elohaynu, melekh ha-olam

Blessed are you, Lord, our God, King of the universe

אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ לְקַבֹּעַ מְזוּזָה

asher keedishanu b'mitzvotav v'tzeevanu leek'boa mezuzah

who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us to affix a mezuzah.