



## **Sicha Summary**

Chelek 19 | Eikev | Sichah 5

### **The Mitzvah and its Reward:**

And you shall inscribe them upon the doorposts of your house and upon your gates. (*Devarim* 11:20)

Our sages teach that if a person affixes a mezuzah on the doorpost of his house, G-d will protect it. (*Tur, Yoreh Deah*, ch. 287)

*Bach* explains that this protection is not the reward for the mitzvah, but rather, it is a “benefit and profit yielded from the very mitzvah itself... in addition to the reward.”

Furthermore, the protection afforded by a mezuzah is not a secondary “benefit or profit” derived from the mitzvah. Rather, it is a primary element of the mitzvah of mezuzah, as *Tosafos* says, the mezuzah “serves to protect.” (*Menachos* 44a, s.v., *tallis*)

This leads us to an unusual conclusion: Generally, when a person fulfills a mitzvah with the intention to receive a reward, his performance is considered to be tainted by an ulterior motive. But when a person fulfills the mitzvah of mezuzah explicitly in order to earn G-d’s protection, it is not considered to be an ulterior motive, because the objective of the mezuzah itself is to provide protection.

### **Potential Contradiction:**

In his laws of mezuzah, Rambam writes as follows:

“Those, however, who write the names of angels inside a mezuzah... these individuals are among those who do not have a portion in the World to Come. Not only do these fools nullify the mitzvah, but furthermore, out of a great mitzvah, they make... as if it were an amulet for their own benefit... (*Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Mezuzah, 5:4*)”

Does this imply that a person who intends to derive protection from the mezuzah “nullifies the mitzvah”?

Not at all. When a person inscribes angelic names inside a mezuzah (notwithstanding the mezuzah being a protective device), it shows that he sees the mezuzah as totally unrelated to a mitzvah. Instead, they see the mezuzah as “an amulet for their own benefit...,” i.e., it is for their benefit, which is “the vanities of the world.”

The mezuzah protects because it is a mitzvah, not because it is “an amulet for their own benefit....”

When a person affixes a halachically valid mezuzah with the intent of fulfilling G-d’s mitzvah — since Hashem instructed us to place a protective device on the entrance of our house — he then fulfills the mitzvah in the ideal way.

### **Roaming Protection:**

The implication of this fact — that the protection the mezuzah offers is not an additional “reward” or a “amulet” aside from the mitzvah but is part of the substance of the mitzvah — is that the mezuzah can afford protection even when it is not affixed to a doorpost.

Thus we find that Rabbi Yehuda Hanasi sent a mezuzah to Artaban — a gentile — and said to him, “I sent you something that, while you sleep, watches over you.” That is, although a gentile cannot possibly fulfill the mitzvah of mezuzah, the mezuzah still affords him protection. (*Yerushalmi, Peah, 1:1*)

**Invoked in Absence:**

Based on all the above, we can also explain a story told by the Previous Rebbe: When the Previous Rebbe was in jail, during his first interrogation, he was asked, “Do you know where you are?” He responded, “Of course, I know where I am. I am in a place that is exempt from the obligation of mezuzah. There are places that are exempt from the obligation of mezuzah, for example: stables, restrooms, etc.” (*Sefer HaSichos 5702*, p. 82.)

What was the Previous trying to accomplish with this unusual response? Even there, in jail, the Previous Rebbe wanted the protection of mezuzah. Since the actual fulfillment of the mitzvah was not possible, he did whatever he could to create some sort of remembrance of the mezuzah. By clarifying that the place where he found himself was exempt from having a mezuzah, he invoked the protection of the mezuzah.

**The Lesson:**

This is why it is critical that we undertake every effort to ensure that every Jewish home has a mezuzah on all doors that are required to have one, and that they should be affixed in a halachically prescribed manner.