

Rabbi's Article III

Mezuzah Protection!

The verses (-Deuteronomy 11:20-21) command us, "And you shall inscribe them upon the doorposts of your house and upon your gates, in order that your days may increase and the days of your children." And this is brought as a law (-[Link](#); Yoreh De'ah 285:1) "And all who are careful in this, their days will be lengthened, and the days of their children," and (-Tur ([Link](#)), 285:1), "And greater than this, the house is protected by it (the mezuzah)." And the Ba"CH (-[Link](#); on Tur, *ibid*) explains, "Meaning, 'Greater than this,' that not only is there the reward of long life, but also that the mitzvah itself protects the house... however, with this mitzvah, there is an enjoyment and profit from the mitzvah itself, that the house is protected by it, and this is in addition to the reward that G-d gives him for performing the mitzvah." So too, we find in *Tosfos* (-[Link](#); Menochos 41a, d"h Talit), "For protection it is done." So much so, that of the reasons given for placing the mezuzah, "At the outer handbreadth near the street," is, "so that it (the mezuzah) protects it (the house)." Hence, the protection of the mezuzah is not a reward, but part-and-parcel of the mitzvah itself, and therefore, having the intention of being protected by the mezuzah, while affixing it does not diminish in the state of completion of appropriately performing this mitzvah. In other words, concerning all other mitzvot, Maimonides writes (-[Link](#); Laws of Teshuvah, 10:1), "A person should not say: 'I will fulfill the mitzvot of the Torah and occupy myself in its wisdom in order to receive all the blessings which are contained within it or in order to merit the life of the world to come.' ...it is not fitting to serve G-d in this manner." Now, even by all other mitzvot, our sages rule (-Pesachim 50b), "A person should always engage in Torah (study and performance of mitzvot), even if (he does so) not for their (own) sake, as through (the performance of mitzvot) not for their (own) sake, (one gains understanding and) comes (to perform them) for their (own) sake." And not only is this permissible, but Maimonides rules that this is a mandatory way to start the journey of service (-*ibid*, Law 5): "Therefore, when one teaches children, women, and most of the common people, one should teach them to serve out of fear and in order to receive a reward. As their knowledge grows and their wisdom increases, this secret should be revealed to them [slowly,] bit by bit. They should become accustomed to this concept gradually until they grasp it and know it and begin serving [G-d] out of love." And nevertheless, when it comes to a person affixing a mezuzah with the intention of being protected, this is part-and-parcel of the mitzvah itself, and not as performing the mitzvah for the sake of its reward.

And that which the Tur himself concludes the law with, "And nevertheless, ones intention in performing it (affixing a mezuzah) should be but for fulfilling the commandment of the Creator, exalted be He, that He commanded upon us," is saying that one should perform the commandment because it is the will of G-d, the Tur is saying, (i) even if the mezuzah would not have protection power we would perform it, and (ii) and even when we are with the intention of the protection, we should not affix the mezuzah only because of its protective powers, but primarily because it is a mitzvah of G-d. And nevertheless, even if one affixes the mezuzah only because of its protective powers, it is a performance of a mitzvah, albeit, "not for its own sake," of which Maimonides rules (-Pirush HaMishnayos, Perek HaChelek) "Urge them on it and strengthen their intention."

Maimonides rules (-Laws of Mezuzah 5:4), "Those, however, who write the names of angels, other sacred names, verses, or forms, on the inside [of a mezuzah] are among those who do not have a portion in the world to come. Not only do these fools nullify the mitzvah, but furthermore, they make from a great mitzvah [which reflects] the unity of the name of the Holy One, blessed be He, the love of Him, and the service of Him, a talisman for their own benefit. They, in their foolish conception, think that this will help them regarding the vanities of the world." And with this, Maimonides is in no manner forbidden the intention of performing the mitzvah with the intention of its protection, --as Maimonides himself rules (-Laws of Idolatry 11:12), "It is, however, permitted for a healthy person to read verses [from the Torah] or chapters from Psalms so that the merit of reading them will protect him and save him,"-- only here, by writing in the mezuzah itself names of angels, etc., one is showing that he sees the mezuzah as, "a talisman for their own benefit," hence, he is committing the prohibition of (-Maimonides, *ibid*), "such people are included among those who deny the Torah, because they relate to the words of Torah as if they are cures for the body, when, in fact, they are cures for the soul." However, when one is affixing the mitzvah of mezuzah (without adding any names of angels), (i) even if he does so only with the intention of the protective powers of this mitzvah, he is at most but one who is doing the mitzvah, "not for its own sake," and (ii) if he affixes the mezuzah but for fulfilling G-d's commandment to affix a mezuzah for the sake of protection, he is fulfilling the mitzvah in an absolute state of completion.

Let us see even deeper into how the protective powers of the mezuzah is part and parcel of the mezuzah, so much so, that we find our sages speaking of (-Mishnayos Keilim 17:16), "And a stick that has a receptacle for a mezuzah," which *Tosfat Yom Tov* (-[Link](#)) explains as, "There were the people during the (times of the) *mishna* carrying a mezuzah with them and considered this a mitzvah, and to protect them," and the sages were okay with this. Even more so, the Jerusalem Talmud tells us (-[Link](#); Peach, chapter 1, law 1), that Rabbeinu HaKodosh (-[Link](#)) sent to Artaban (-[Link](#); a gentile to whom mezuzah was not a mitzvah) a mezuzah, and told him, "I sent you something that watches over you," and so it was (-Shiltos (-[Link](#)), Simon 146), that Artaban's only daughter was suffering from a demon possessing her, and as soon as Artaban received the mezuzah, it protected the household and the demon left his daughter. Hence, we see that being that the protection factor of the mezuzah is part-and-parcel of the mitzvah of mezuzah, hence, we find that something of the protective force of the mezuzah remains attached to it, even when it isn't being used in fulfilling the mitzvah of mezuzah!

With this we understand how important the Rebbe's *Mezuzah Campaign* (-[Link](#)) is in bringing the fulfillment of the verse (-Psalms 121:8), "The L-rd will guard your going out and your coming in from now and to eternity."