

OVERVIEW of the Daf

1) Mezuzah rulings (cont.)

R' Yehudah in the name of Shmuel rules that a mezuzah written on two columns is invalid.

This ruling is unsuccessfully challenged.

R' Yehudah in the name of Shmuel rules that placement of the mezuzah is determined by the hinge.

R' Adda explains what is meant by the hinge.

A related incident is cited.

R' Yehudah in the name of Rav teaches that if the mezuzah is attached like a bolt it is invalid.

This ruling is unsuccessfully challenged from a statement of R' Yitzchok bar Yosef.

A second ruling of R' Yitzchok bar Yosef is unsuccessfully challenged.

Shmuel and R' Huna disagree about the correct placement of the mezuzah on the doorpost.

Shmuel's position that it must be at the beginning of the upper third of the doorpost is unsuccessfully challenged.

Rava states that it must be placed within the tefach closest to the street.

Two explanations for this ruling are presented.

A related teaching is cited.

Rava states that if the mezuzah is placed more than a tefach deep in the doorpost it is invalid.

A proof for this ruling is suggested but rejected.

A Baraisa describes how to affix a mezuzah to a reed doorpost.

R' Acha the son of Rava qualifies this ruling.

Rava rules that a defective doorway is exempt from the mezuzah obligation.

The meaning of a defective doorway is explained.

Rabbah bar Shilai in the name of R' Chisda rules that an **אכסדרה** is exempt from the mezuzah obligation.

The implication of this ruling is questioned and the wording is corrected.

Abaye gives anecdotal evidence that supports the principle that posts made to support the roof are exempt from the mezuzah obligation. This ruling is unsuccessfully challenged.

Rechavah in the name of R' Yehudah exempts a **בֵּי הַרְזִיקִי**.

Rav explains what is a **בֵּי הַרְזִיקִי**.

A Baraisa elaborates further on the halachic obligation of affixing a mezuzah to a gatehouse.

Rav and Shmuel disagree with Rabbah and R' Yosef about the point of the dispute recorded in the Baraisa. ■

Distinctive INSIGHT

Proper placement of a mezuzah on a doorpost

אמר רבי יהודה אמר רב עשאה כמין נגר פסולה

The Gemara is in the midst of its discussion regarding the technical halachos of writing a mezuzah and affixing it to the doorway. Rav Yehuda says in the name of Rav that if a mezuzah is installed as a "נגר," it is not valid. Rashi and Rabeinu Tam both offer explanations of this term.

Rashi explains that the mezuzah was installed horizontally into the doorpost, similar to a bolt which is inserted into the doorpost horizontally. This placement of the mezuzah is not valid, because the mezuzah is supposed to be placed upright on the doorpost, not into it. Rashi also comments that if the mezuzah is placed partially upright and partially laying down, at a 45-degree angle like the bend in the joint of the hip-bone, this is acceptable. Rashi adds that this is the position of the mezuzah in the house of the Rebbe.

Rabeinu Yehonasan explains that the reason why inserting the mezuzah horizontally into the doorpost is unacceptable is that it is only respectable that the mezuzah should lay upright, which is the same orientation which a Sefer Torah should be placed in its ark.

Piskei Ri"d explains that laying the mezuzah horizontally is not valid because it is placed on the doorpost, which itself is vertical, so the mezuzah should also be aligned with the doorpost. The mezuzah is called by its name specifically because it is placed upon the doorpost, which is called the mezuzah of the entranceway, as we find in the verse (Devarim 6:9), "it shall be placed upon the mezuzos of your houses."

In Tosafos, Rabeinu Tam says that it is better to place the mezuzah horizontally, and that placing it vertically is not respectful. Therefore, Rabeinu Tam holds that when the Gemara says that laying it "as a bolt" is not valid means that it was placed vertically. Rabeinu Tam writes that it is also better for the parchments in the tefillin to be placed into their compartments in a horizontal orientation. Mordechai (#961) writes that Rabeinu Tam wrote that when he could afford it, he would build an aron kodesh in which he would be able to lay the Sifrei Torah horizontally.

The Bac"b (Yoreh De'ah #289) writes that according to Rabeinu Tam, a mezuzah should be placed horizontally across the doorpost. Mordechai (ibid.) also writes that according to Rabeinu Tam, one should carve out a hole in the doorpost itself, into which the mezuzah should be inserted.

Tur (Y.D. #289) concludes that a mezuzah should be placed partially vertical and partially horizontal, in order to accommodate the opinions of both Rashi and Rabeinu Tam.

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HALACHAH Highlight

The correct height for the mezuzah

מצוה להניחה בתחילת שליש העליון

The mitzvah is to place it at the beginning of the upper third

The Gemara teaches that the mezuzah should be placed at the beginning of the upper third of the height of the doorway. Yerushalmi (Megilla 4:12) explains that this ruling applies when the beginning of the upper third is shoulder height, but if the beginning of the upper third is higher than shoulder height the mezuzah is not placed at the beginning of the upper third; rather it is placed at shoulder height. Tosafos¹ asserts that Yerushalmi is not consistent with our Gemara, but Mordechai² cites authorities who are not convinced that this matter is subject to dispute. Levush³ rules in accordance with Yerushalmi that when a doorway is very tall one should place the mezuzah at shoulder height. On the other hand, Aruch HaShulchan⁴ notes that Rambam, Tur and Shulchan Aruch do not mention Yerushalmi. Nevertheless, Aruch HaShulchan rules in accordance with Yerushalmi since the latter Poskim cite Yerushalmi approvingly.

There is an additional debate regarding the height at which those who follow Yerushalmi would no longer affix the mezuzah at the beginning of the upper third. Teshuvos Maharsham⁵ suggests that Yerushalmi's ruling begins when the beginning of the upper third of the doorway is more than twenty amos since one does not see things that are higher than twenty amos. Teshuvos Divrei Malkiel⁶ writes that if the beginning of the upper third is higher than shoulder height for an average size person the mezuzah should be

REVIEW and Remember

1. What is a ציר היכר?

2. What is the correct height for a mezuzah?

3. In what way is Hashem different than people of flesh and blood?

4. What is the exemption of אחזוקי תקוה?

placed at shoulder height. He emphasizes that the determination is not made according to the height of the individual; rather it is determined by the average height of a person. Beis Yatziv⁷ relates that the author of Teshuvos Divrei Yatziv maintained that the mezuzah should not be higher than shoulder height of the one who puts up the mezuzah. When it comes to the correct placement of the mezuzah on a room that is designed for children there are different practices. Some place the mezuzah at the beginning of the upper third whereas according to others since the room is designed for children it should be placed at what is shoulder height for the children. ■

1. תוסי ע"ב ד"ה ומאי.
2. מרדכי פ"ג רמז תתקס"א.
3. לבוש יו"ד סי' רפ"ט סעי' ב'.
4. ערוה"ש שם סעי' י'.
5. שו"ת מהרש"ם ח"ג סי' רי"ט.
6. שו"ת דברי מלכאל ח"ג סי' ע"ט.
7. בית יצ"ב פ"ג אות ד'. ■

STORIES Off the Daf

A Proper Salute

"והוא משמרן מבחוץ..."

The Damasek Eliezer of Vizhnitz, zt"l, was very particular that the bochorim in his yeshiva should always kiss the mezuzah as they entered and exited a room. When asked why, he explained: "It is well known that when a lower-ranking soldier encounters an officer he must salute him to show that he is under his authority. If a soldier refuses to do so for any reason he is in danger of being severely punished since he refused to

recognize the officer's rank.

"The rule is that the supernal kingdom is patterned after earthly kingship. Since the mezuzah declares Hashem's unity and we find in Menachos 33 that Hashem sits outside and guards us through the mezuzah, we must be fastidious to kiss it when we enter or leave a room. In this manner we show that we accept Hashem's kingship on ourselves."¹

Interestingly, the Maharil Diskin, zt"l, appointed messengers to go from door to door and check each house's mezuzos to ensure they were really kosher. Since he used money slated for the orphans under his care for this as well,

many people wondered how this was permitted. After all, the halachah is that money slated for orphans should not be used for other purposes.

When Rav Bentzion Yadler, zt"l, asked the Maharil Diskin about this, he explained, "The verse states that we should put mezuzos on our doors 'למען ירבו ימיכם'. So if I ensure that people's mezuzos are kosher, the parents will live longer and there will be fewer orphans. Obviously, this is permitted from the money slated for orphans since the fewer orphans there the more money there is for each one's use!"² ■

1. נפשות חסידיו, ח"ב, ע' ק"י"ט.
2. בטוב ירושלים, ע' צ"ד ■