

Rebbe Responsa

The Rebbe's English Letters

Checking Mezuzos / Significance of Mezuzah

Issue 15

Ki Seitzei, 5783 - Shnas Hakhel

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FOREWORD

We are proud to present the 15th installment of *Rebbe Responsa*, a selection of the Lubavitcher Rebbe's letters written originally in English

Being that it is customary to check Mezuzos and Tefillin in the month of Elul,¹ in this week's booklet we present several letters in which the Rebbe advises the checking of Mezuzos, in the month of Elul and in response to various issues. Towards the end of the booklet are letters discussing the special Mitzvah of Mezuzah in general.

The letters published in this booklet are sourced from photocopies of the original sent letter, unless otherwise noted. All footnotes to the letters were added by the publisher.

The Rebbe's English letters contain a wealth of guidance and perspective on myriads of topics in a style relatable to Jews from all walks of life. To view over 5,000 of these letters, download the *Rebbe Responsa* app.

The Rebbe Responsa Team

¹ See *Mateh Efraim* Siman 581:10. See also *Sefer Hasichos 5748*, vol. 2, p. 610.

1

Spiritual Ups and Downs; Checking Tefillin and
Mezuzos in Elul²

By the Grace of G-d
25th of Elul, 5735
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Mr. . . .
Skokie, Ill.

Greeting and Blessing:

I am in receipt of your letter in which you write of your spiritual ups and downs.

Surely you know that sad to say, this is not unusual among young people. Indeed, the Alter Rebbe explains it at length in the holy Tanya that this is an experience also of those who have attained the high level of Benoni. At the same time he explains that this should not bring to a state of **atzvus** (depression), though occasionally there is room for a feeling of **merirus** (bitterness), as he explains there the difference between the two terms; the first being inhibiting and paralyzing, while the second, being in a state of dissatisfaction, is stimulating and energizing to attain a higher spiritual level (see there, ch. 26 and further. As you know there is an English translation of the Tanya with footnotes, etc.)

The present days of Elul are particularly auspicious for spiritual advancement as the Alter Rebbe explains elsewhere (Likutei Torah, Re'eh 32b) by means of the parable of the "King in the Field." These auspicious days are followed by the auspicious

² *The Letter and the Spirit*, vol 6, p. 296.

Note: Letters printed in "*The Letter and the Spirit*" are from the Archives of Rabbi Nissan Mindel A"H, the Rebbe's personal secretary entrusted with writing up the Rebbe's orally dictated responses. The "Nissan Mindel Archives" are comprised of secretarial copies, including first drafts and unsent letters, and may have subsequently been published with editorial changes. Therefore, the letters as they appear in the book may not be the final signed version.

“Ten Days of Teshuvo (Repentance)” of which our Sages say³ that they are referred to in the verse, “Seek G-d where He can be found, call on Him where He is near.”⁴

It is advisable and it is also customary at this time, to have the Tefillin and the Mezuzos checked, to make sure they are kosher. I trust you also carefully observe the three daily shiurim of Chumash, Tehillim and Tanya.

Wishing you a Kesivo va'Chasimo Tova,

With blessing,

2

Advice for Anxiety⁵

By the Grace of G-d
10th of Elul, 5738
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Mr. Benyomin Muller

Greeting and Blessing:

I duly received your letter of September 8th, and thanks for the good news it contained. As requested I will remember you in prayer, and may G-d grant the fulfillment of your heart's desires for good In all the matters about which you wrote.

In reply to your question as to what specific Mitzvah will help you overcome your present frustration and anxiety - in general, all the Mitzvoth, in addition to being a must for their own sake, are the channels and vessels to receive G-d's blessings in all needs. Therefore, every additional effort in bringing the daily life and conduct in fuller accord with the Torah and Mitzvoth, is

³ *Rosh Hashana* 18a.

⁴ *Yeshayahu* 55:6.

⁵ Printed in *Bracha V'Hatzlacha*, vol. 2 (Cheder Menachem, L.A., 5768), 151.

bound to bring additional Divine blessings. And there is always room for improvement in all matters of goodness and holiness, Torah and Mitzvoth, which are infinite, being connected with the Infinite.

At this time, it would be advisable for you to have your Tefillin as well as Mezuzahs checked to make sure they are Kosher - If this has not been done within the past twelve months.

Wishing you a Kesiva V'Chasima Tovo, for a good and sweet year,

With blessing,

3

The Disaster of Intermarriage

By the Grace of G-d
14th of Elul, 5740
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Mr. . . .

Stanford University,
Stanford Ca., 94305

Greeting and Blessing:

I am in receipt of your letter of the 14th of Av, with the enclosure, which reached me with some delay.

With regard to the acquaintance about whom you write, there can be no question whatever that you surely cannot be serious about it, for any form of intermarriage, G-d forbid, must be absolutely ruled out, not only from the viewpoint of religion, but also as a sure disaster from any viewpoint. Indeed, if there are any true feelings, neither of the parties concerned should be involved in what amounts to spiritual and physical suicide; and this is not an overly harsh expression, considering what is really involved in such a situation, G-d forbid.

As to how to handle the matter, and generally to have the proper Torah guidance, you should talk things over with a competent Rabbi, for in such serious matters where one is personally involved, one cannot, of course, have an objective judgment.

Receipt is enclosed for your Tzedoko, and may it additionally stand you in good stead, to be blessed with Hatzlocho to walk in the way of G-d, the way of the Torah and Mitzvos, from strength to strength.

The present time is particularly suitable to have your Tefillin checked to make sure they are Kosher.

Wishing you a Kesivo vaChasimo Tovah, for a good and sweet year,

With blessing,

M. Schneerson

4

Always Room for Advancement

By the Grace of G-d
Rosh Chodesh Elul, 5742
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Rabbi Israel Haber⁶
P.O. Box 611
Tevarya

Greeting and Blessing:

I am in receipt of your letter of the 22nd of Av, with enclosure. As requested, I will remember you in prayer for the fulfillment of your heart's desires for good with regard to yourself and all the members of your family.

There is surely no need to remind you - except in the sense of "encourage the energetic"⁷ - that there is always room for

⁶ For more information on Rabbi Haber and his relationship with the Rebbe see *A Rabbi's Northern Adventure (Haber, 2003)*

advancement in all matters of Yiddishkeit, Torah and Mitzvos, especially as you have the great Zechus of living in the Holy Land, “The Land on which G-d’s Eyes are continuously, from the beginning of the year to the end of the year.”⁸

Receipt is enclosed for your Tzedoko, and may the Zechus of it additionally stand you all in good stead.

It would be advisable to have the Tefillin and Mezuzos checked to make sure they are Kosher, if this has not been done within the past twelve months.

Wishing you and all yours a Kesivo vaChasimo Tovo, for a good and sweet year.

With blessing,

M. Schneerson

5

Taste Disorder⁹

By the Grace of G-d
Chanukah 5734
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Mrs. . . .
New York, N. Y. 10019

Blessing and Greeting:

I duly received your letter in which you write that you suffer from a taste of bitterness in your mouth, and would like to see me in this connection if I could help you in some way.

There is no need to come to see me on this matter, since I can convey to you in writing what I would have said to you personally. It is that, first of all, you should be meticulous in your

⁷ See *Makos* 23a. *Sifri*, Nasso, 5:2; *Bamidbar Rabba* 7:6.

⁸ *Devarim* 11:12.

⁹ *The Letter and the Spirit*, Vol 3, 208 (see footnote 2).

observance of the dietary laws, to be careful to eat only kosher food, both at home and outside, for, G-d Who ordained these laws, is everywhere.

I would also like to make the following point, after a prefatory observation. Every living thing must have its proper environment, and cannot function harmoniously if it is taken out of its proper environment. An extreme example of this is found in fish, which must have its water, while land animals cannot live in water.¹⁰ Thus, what is a vital necessity for one living thing may be just the opposite for another.

In a similar way, a Jew can function properly only in the atmosphere which is suitable for the Jewish soul, which in plain words means living the Jewish way of life in accordance with the will of G-d, as is set forth and codified in the Shulchan Aruch. This includes also, of course, the observance of Shabbos, wherein a Jew can find harmony only through the cessation of work, even though for non-Jews this would have the opposite effect. I have cited the laws of kashrus and Shabbos observance only because of their obvious and basic importance, but the same is true of all the Divine commandments which a Jew is duty-bound to observe in his daily life, which constitute the right ecological conditions for a Jew to function properly both physically and spiritually.

After you have resolved to order your life accordingly, you ought to consult a specialist again, for then the treatment he may prescribe would also prove more effective in your case.

It is customary in such a situation to make sure that the mezuzah at the entrance to your bedroom is kosher and properly affixed, and similarly throughout the house or apartment.

Wishing you hatzlocho in all above, as well as a happy Chanukah and a growing measure of light in all your affairs.

With blessing,

¹⁰ See *Berachos* 61b.

6

Healthy Pregnancy

By the Grace of G-d
18th of Sivan, 5730
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Dr. & Mrs. Zeev & Gitel Bunya Greene
1601 Spring Valley Road
Golden Valley, Minn. 55422

Greeting and Blessing:

I have just received your letter of the 13th of Sivan, with the good news that your wife is expecting. May G-d grant that she should have a normal and easy pregnancy, as well as a normal and easy delivery in a happy and auspicious hour.

In reply to your question if there is any advice you should follow, I would suggest to follow the advice of my father-in-law of saintly memory that until the pregnancy has entered into the fifth month, the matter should be kept confidential except in regard to the closest relatives.

It is also customary, especially at such a time, to have the Tefillin and Mezuzoth checked, to make sure they are Kosher, if this has not been done within the past twelve months.

I take this opportunity to mention also the following, though your wife undoubtedly observes it in any case, and that is the custom of Jewish women to put aside a small coin for Tzedoko before lighting the candles Erev Shabbos, and Erev Yom Tov, בלי
גג.

To conclude on the note of the beginning of the letter, may everything be in the best possible way, and that you and your wife should together bring up all your children, and the expected happy addition, to a life of Torah, Chuppah and Good Deeds, in good health and happy circumstances.

With Blessing,

M. Schneerson

7

Ayin Hara

By the Grace of G-d
7th of Iyar, 5737
Brooklyn, N. Y.

Blessing and Greeting:

This is to acknowledge receipt of your correspondence, including your latest of April 20th.

I will again remember you in prayer in the matters about which you write, and may G-d grant that you should have good news to report.

Enclosed is a copy of a message, which I trust you will find interesting and useful.

With blessing,

M. Schneerson

P.S. Since writing the above letter, your letter of April 26th was received, in which you write about an “Ayin Hora.”

It is explained in our Torah, called **Toras Chaim** and **Toras Emes**, because it is our guide in life and all its teachings are true, that when a Jew conducts his daily life in accordance with G-d’s Will, as set forth in the Shulchan Aruch, thus keeping wide open the channels to receive G-d’s blessings, then there is no room for fear or anxiety, as is frequently stated in our Holy Scriptures such as, “G-d is with me, I shall not fear,”¹¹ “He sends His angels to guide you in all your ways,”¹² and many others in this vein.

If you have not had your Mezuzoth checked recently, it would be well to have them checked to make sure they are Kosher and properly affixed.

¹¹ *Tehillim* 118:6.

¹² *Ibid.*, 91:11.

Significance of Mezuzah

7

A Constant Reminder¹³

... In light of the above, the Torah has given us certain mitzvot which, in addition to all their other meanings, are notable “reminders.” Again, to mention a familiar example, the mezuzah, (among other things), reminds the Jew upon leaving and returning home that G-d, Who is our very life and strength, is One, etc.,¹⁴ as we read in the portion of Shema which the mezuzah contains. Similarly, upon rising in the morning, we recite a prayer in which we declare that our soul, which G-d returns to us every morning, is pure, etc. And so there are many mitzvot, which constantly help us to remember our real purpose in life-to serve G-d “in all our ways.”¹⁵ There are mitzvot which serve as reminders to all Jews, since all Jews are equal in regard to the observance of those mitzvot. But there are also mitzvot that apply to certain groups only, such as Kohanim. In each case, there are specific reminders for those concerned ...

(Excerpt from a letter from 5735)

8

Everything Belongs to G-d¹⁶

... You also asked, Why is a Mezuzah necessary on the doors of the house, as it has the first two portions of Shema, which we say several times every day? The answer is that one of the reasons of the Mezuzah is that a Jew puts out a sign that his house and all that is in it belongs to G-d, and was given to him by G-d, for this is the meaning of the Shema. The Mezuzah has to remind the Jew of this every time he leaves the house and enters the house. It

¹³ *The Letter and the Spirit*, vol 1, p. 390 (see footnote 2).

¹⁴ See also *Mishneh Torah*, Hilchos Mezuzah, 6:13.

¹⁵ See *Mishlei* 3:6.

¹⁶ From a typed copy.

would not be enough to just say the Shema, for the "Sign" appears in the Mezuzah only. . .

(Excerpted from a letter dated 28th of Sivan, 5717)

9

G-d's Partnership

By the Grace of G-d
Erev Shabbos Mevorchim
Chodesh Elul, 5744

Brooklyn, N.Y.

Greeting and Blessing:

In addition to the gratifying regards received through our mutual friends, I was pleased to receive your letter of Aug. 16, with the news that on Sept. 17 your son . . . will inaugurate the new enterprise, Channel 61. May it be with Mazzal and Brachah.

The Mezuzahs you requested for the new business premises are enclosed. I trust you will permit me to be [a] partner with you in the cost of the Mezuzahs on a 50-50 basis. The essential thing, of course, is HaShem's partnership, as explained in the Torah, **Toras-Emes**, that the Divine Name on the Mezuzah, **Shin, Dalet, Yud**, is an acronym of the words שומר דלתות ישראל - "Guardian of the Doors of Jews."¹⁷ This includes not only guardian-ship of everyone and everything within these doors, but also outside, as it is written, "HaShem will guard your going out and your coming in, from now and for all time" (Psalm 121).

If the above is essential to any Jewish dwelling, it is particularly important in connection with a broadcasting channel that will hopefully be instrumental in strengthening goodwill between all people and in the dissemination of the G-d-given values and principles which are indispensable to making the world a better

¹⁷ See *Siddur Ha'Arizal* (Kavanas Hamezuzah); *Mishnas Chassidim*, Meseches Mezuzah 3:9. See also *Kol Bo* Hilchos Mezuzah (cited by *Darchei Moshe, Yoreh De'ah* Siman 288).

place to live in for all mankind. Particularly in this day and age, when the world at large urgently needs a substantial infusion of these vital elements in the day-to-day relationships of individuals and nations.

Since everything is by Divine Providence, it is significant that the dedication ceremony will take place in the month of Elul. This month, as you know, is especially auspicious. It is also a time of self-assessment regarding achievements in the outgoing year, with a view to doing even better in the New Year, both in personal as well as in public affairs.

I am confident that your guidance and inspiration will continue to be felt in your family and in your surroundings in the area of Torah-true Jewish living, while promoting also among gentiles the so-called Seven Noahide Laws, with all their ramifications which were given by G-d to ensure a decent human society. As you know, the President of the United States has made this a strong point in his Proclamation to the Nation in connection with "Education Day - USA."

With prayerful wishes that as you have enjoyed G-d's blessings in the past, so you should be blessed with Hatzlachah in all above; and that you and your wife should have much true Nachas from . . . and from all your offspring;

And, in keeping with Jewish custom and tradition, wishing you and all yours a Good and Sweet Year, both materially and spiritually,

With esteem and blessing,

M. Schneerson

P.S. Please convey to . . . and . . . my appreciation of their warm sentiments, as well as my good wishes for the new year. Thanks.

Every Mezuzah Adds Protection to All Jews

FREE RENDITION¹⁸

By the Grace of G-d
Rosh Chodesh Elul, 5736
Brooklyn, N. Y.

To The Jewish Mothers and Daughters,
Everywhere,
G-d bless you

Blessing and Greeting:

In view of the recent events – the hijacking and saving of the hostages held in Uganda;¹⁹ and the subsequent attempt of the terrorists to perpetrate a vicious reprisal, G-d forbid, in Kushta (Istanbul),²⁰

It should be understood that these events are an indication that Jews must, at the earliest possible, strengthen all aspects of their security and defenses – first and foremost in their spiritual life, which is the channel to receive G-d’s blessings also in the physical aspect, namely, to know the right ways and means that have to be undertaken in the natural order of things, and to fully succeed in these efforts, in accordance with the Divine promise,

¹⁸ This letter in Yiddish and Hebrew is printed in *Igros Kodesh*, vol. 31, letters 11,898-99 (pp. 276-281), some of the following notes were taken from there. Although this letter is titled “Free Translation,” such letters which were typed on the Rebbe’s stationary were usually looked over by the Rebbe who often corrected them (see, for example, the Rebbe’s edits on the letter to the Annual Governor’s Dinner of Yeshivas Tomchei Tmimim Montreal (Rosh Chodesh Adar II, 5736) on the Rebbe Responsa app).

¹⁹ The miraculous rescue at Entebbe airport in Uganda.

²⁰ On 15 Av 5736, there was a hijack attempt on an El Al plane in Istanbul. The terrorists wanted to hijack the plane and bring it to Uganda as revenge for the above-mentioned rescue.

“G-d, your G-d, will bless you in all that **you do**”²¹ – to be protected and secured from enemies, and to be spared any undesirable happenings, G-d forbid.

* * *

The above events remind each and all of our Jewish brethren in general, and Jewish mothers and daughters in particular – since every married Jewish woman is called **Akeres Habayis**, “Foundation of the Home,” and those not yet married are to be Akeres Habayis, for which they must prepare themselves from tender age – the following:

The present situation calls for the protection of every Jewish home. True protection is that which only G-d provides, as it is written, “G-d guards the city.”²² To ensure this Divine guardianship, the home has to be conducted in all aspects according to G-d’s will.

Then the home is also an abode for the Shechinah (G-d’s Presence), in accordance with His promise, “I will dwell **among them**.”²³

In addition to this, G-d has given our people a special gift wherewith to protect the home, namely, the Mitzvah of **Mezuzah**. Our Sages declare explicitly that “the home is protected by it (the Mezuzah).”²⁴

Moreover, this protection embraces the members of the household also when they go out of the house, as it is written, “G-d will guard your going and your coming from now and forever.”²⁵ It is further explained in our holy sources that the Divine Name (Shin-Dalet-Yud) written on the back of the sacred

²¹ *Devarim* 15:18.

²² *Tehillim* 127:1.

²³ *Shemos* 25:8.

²⁴ See *Avodah Zarah* 11a; *Menachos* 33b; *Tur, Yoreh De’ah* 285.

²⁵ *Tehillim* 121:8. See *Zohar III* 263b and 266b which explains this verse as referring to the Mitzvah of Mezuzah.

Mezuzah parchment spells out the words, “Shomer Dalsos Yisroel” – “Guardian of Jewish Doors.”²⁶

* * *

Let it also be remembered that inasmuch as all Jews constitute one body, and are bound up with one another, every Mezuzah is a Divine protection not only for the individual home, with everybody and everything in it, but each additional kosher Mezuzah that is affixed on a doorpost of any Jewish home, anywhere, adds to the protection of **all** our people everywhere.

And considering – as mentioned above – that every Jewish housewife is an Akeres Habayis, and every Jewish girl a future Akeres Habayis, they have a special **Zechus** (merit) and responsibility in the matter of Mezuzah, to see to it that not only a kosher Mezuzah be affixed on every doorpost in their home that is required to have a Mezuzah, but that the same be done by their Jewish neighbors and friends, and in all Jewish homes.

* * *

I hope and pray that you will do this with inspiration and joy, which, in addition to increasing the Hatzlocho in this effort, will also inspire many others to do likewise, and the Zechus Horabim will further stand you in good stead.

The present time is particularly auspicious for this endeavor, as for endeavors in all matters of goodness and holiness, since we are in the beginning of the month of Elul – the month of spiritual stocktaking, to complete the deficiencies of the outgoing year and to prepare for the New Year, that it be a good and blessed year for each and all of us and for our Jewish people as a whole.

With esteem and blessing of Kesivo vaChasimo Toivo,

/Signed: Menachem Schneerson/

²⁶ See above note 16.

11

Can Lack of Mezuzos Cause Harm?

By the Grace of G-d
20th of Sivan, 5734
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Prof. J. J. Petuchowski²⁷
7836 Greenland Place
Cincinnati O.

Sholom uBrocho:

This is to acknowledge receipt of your letter of 16th of Sivan, in which you ask for a clarification of an "explanation" attributed to me.²⁸

Needless to say, I was surprised that you should have given any credence to the purported statement, especially since we had occasion to meet and talk some years ago. At any rate, the enclosed copy on the subject matter will surely clarify It . . .²⁹

With esteem and blessing,³⁰

²⁷ Professor Jakob Josef Petuchowski, Professor of Jewish Studies at the Hebrew Union College Institute of Religion, Cincinnati, Ohio.

²⁸ In his letter Petuchowski asks the Rebbe about the validity of a rumor he heard that the Rebbe attributed the recent Ma'alot massacre to the fact that the school had invalid Mezuzos.

²⁹ Together with this letter the Rebbe enclosed an excerpt of his talk on Shabbos Parshas Bamidbar of this year, in which he explains the above issue, both in Hebrew as well as in English. Attached is part of this excerpt that has a bearing on Mezuzah. The rest of the letter can be found on the Rebbe Responsa app.

³⁰ This letter did not reach the Professor and was lost in the mail. The letter above is a secretary's copy the Rebbe sent to him after being notified that he had never received it (hence the lack of a signature). See letter dated [5 Av, 5734](#).

URGENT CALL FROM THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE שליט"א

The Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, שליט"א, has initiated a massive "MITZVAH CAMPAIGN" in connection with the situation for Jews in the world today, and especially in the Holy Land. The Rebbe pointed out that the Mitzvos emphasized in this campaign have, in addition to the essential feature common to all precepts, the particular characteristic of strengthening protection and security for the Jewish people in general, especially where it is needed most. The protective effect brought about by the performance of these Mitzvos goes to the extent that it negates, not only the enemy's action, but also their evil intentions, and ultimately transforms the enemy into a friend.

He explained that his intention was not to suggest that the recent tragedies of Kiryat Shemona, Maalot, Shamir, and Nahariya, occurred because of a lacking in the Mitzvos. Rather, it was analogous to the essential army rule of wearing a helmet to protect against enemy fire. If someone were to take away the helmet (or to prevent a soldier from wearing it), and (after even a long interval) the enemy were to fire and wound, etc., the soldier, it is obvious that the cause of the wounding, etc., was the enemy fire. But, had the soldier been wearing his helmet, he would not have been wounded, since the helmet would have shielded him. Therefore, the one who deprives the soldier of his helmet must also be accountable for the wounding, etc., because he hampered the soldier's protection.

The same applies in our case. There are causes to these tragedies. As Maimonides says (Laws of Fasting 1, 3) "G-d forbid to say that this was natural law or coincidental."

Similarly, in connection with the following Mitzvah Campaigns. Certainly it is not possible to say, G-d forbid, that the deficiency in these Mitzvah Campaigns caused the tragedies. But by the fulfillment of these Mitzvos, besides the major point that one should fulfill them because they are the Mitzvos of G-d, they also guard, shield and save the Jewish people from the enemies who surround them.

It is forbidden, G-d forbid, to treat lightly or abuse these Mitzvah Campaigns because one would thus deny the shielding and protection of the Jewish people, G-d forbid. (And even though G-d will surely guard the Jewish people, and "The Guardian of Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps," nevertheless, in military strategy it is important to wear the helmet—and according to our Torah this is a "life saving matter.")

MEZUZAH

Every Jewish home should make sure to have Mezuzos affixed to the doorposts. Those that already have Mezuzos affixed should have them checked (inspected) by a pious scribe to make sure they are made of parchment and are hand written and in no need of repair. The Divine Name SHA-DAI, on the outside of the Mezuzah, is an acrostic of the Hebrew words which mean “Guardian of the Doorways of Israel.” According to the Zohar, the verse: “The L-rd will guard your going out and coming in, now and forevermore” refers to the Mezuzah, which means that a Mezuzah guards the Jew both at home and outside until he returns.

All the aforementioned matters protect not only the Jew who fulfills these Mitzvos, but also all the Jews wherever they are—even those who have not yet fulfilled the Mitzvos. Although the fulfillment of a Mitzvah by one individual does not absolve another, and every effort should be made to see that a second Jew also fulfill them, still the fulfillment of these Mitzvos by each individual elicits a protection for the whole of the Jewish community for we are all interdependent—“All of Israel are brothers and we all have one Father.” So does Maimonides give the *Halachic* ruling: “Everyone should consider himself all year round as exactly balanced between merit and otherwise . . . and so should he consider the whole world. When he does one Mitzvah, he then weighs himself and the whole world to the state of merit, and he causes himself and the whole world to have salvation and redemption.”

12**Mezuzah Brings Reward in This World³¹**

B.H.

15th of Sivan, 5737

Brooklyn, N.Y.

Rabbi Dr. Dov Mandelbaum
920 Park Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10028

Sholom uBracha:

This is to acknowledge receipt of your letter of Rosh Chodesh Sivan, and the previous correspondence with enclosure.

Referring to your remarks in regard to the Presentation of the Mezuzah Campaign and similar activities, I must say, with all due respect, that I am surprised at your objections to pointing out the reward associated with the Mezuzah in terms of protection, particularly the simile of a helmet, etc. For, precisely in the case

³¹ Secretary's copy from the Mindel Archive.

of the Mezuzah the reward in this world is emphasized many times in our sacred sources, and it has, moreover, the distinction of having its reward expressly formulated in the Shulchan Aruch to wit: ..וכל הזהיר בה יאריכו ימיו וימי בניו, ואם אינו זהיר כו' (יו"ד רפ"ה, סס"א).³²

It is clear that the Shulchan Aruch speaks here of reward in this world, in the plain sense.

If this formulation raises questions, such as the holocaust, etc., as you mention, our Sages have already dealt with such questions in their characteristic laconic fashion; and, directly bearing on the subject at hand, they have told us that Moshe Rabbeinu (even before the Parshah of Mezuzah was written) questioned G-d: (ברכות ז,א) ³³ מפני מה יש צדיק וטוב לו וצדיק ורע לו? The same question has been asked through the ages, including the Book of Iyov, which you cite.

I should like to add that this is the position of not only a believing Jew, but – subconsciously, and perhaps even consciously – it is the basic approach of every educator worthy of his vocation who teaches children (in age or knowledge) to develop moral attitudes and behavior – not on the merit of pure idealism alone, but also and largely on the basis of their pragmatic value. Most educators will not hesitate to advocate the virtues of honesty, justice, etc. for their immediate reward in terms of personal contentment and peace of mind, as well as for the good of the society in which to live.

Moreover, though many an educator or spiritual leader may be prepared to compromise in certain areas under social pressures or the sway of the so-called liberal democracy, everyone has certain ideals and principles where one will not conform to the

³² Translation: And whoever is careful in this [Mitzvah of Mezuzah] will have a long life and his children will have long lives, and if one is not careful...

³³ Translation: Why are there righteous people that prosper and righteous people that suffer?

rule of ³⁴כל דאלימ גבר³⁴ in a society where crime has been steadily rising in recent years. And while propagating to his students adherence to these ideals at personal sacrifice for the sake of a better world, etc., it will be found, on closer scrutiny, that the motivation is not entirely that of pure altruism.

Even in the case of a none too observant Jew, it is useful for him to be reminded of the second portion of the Shema: "If you will hearken diligently to My commandments - I will give your rains in their due season. ..." ³⁵ And though he has seen pogroms and the like when they were apparently least deserved, he will attribute them to some unknown causes, but will not let such questions deter him personally, expecting things to be different in his case.

There is surely no need to elaborate further on the above.

With esteem and blessing,

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A Clear Ruling in Shulchan Aruch³⁶

By the Grace of G-d
4th of Tammuz, 5737
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Mr. . . .
Toronto, Ont.

Greeting and Blessing:

Your letter of . . . reached me with considerable delay. I hasten to reply to it because of the purpose of this letter as will be pointed out later.

³⁴ Translation: Whoever is stronger will win.

³⁵ *Vayikra* 26:3-4.

³⁶ Published in *Teshura*, Wenger (5771-09-07), *Letter and the Spirit*, vol. 6, p. 419 (see footnote 2). This letter also seems to be referring to an objection on the Rebbe's stance regarding the divine protection of the Mezuzos.

Needless to say, I was very much surprised, to say the least, at the unbridled expressions and adjectives contained in your letter in regard to a person whom you have never met and do not know.

But the purpose of this letter is not to take you to task for it, which would probably be useless in any case.

What prompts me to reply to your letter at all is that in trying to find some explanation for it, the only conclusion I can come up with is that your Tefillin are most likely not kosher, or your Mezuzos are not kosher, or both. I therefore consider it my duty to call your attention to it with a view to having them checked and rectified. And though this, too, may prove - to use your expression - "counter-productive." I will at least have done my duty.

It is possible that at some future time you will reflect on the subject matter and reconsider your position. If you do, it will be helpful to you to note, and look up, the following source-reference in the Shulchan Aruch: **Yoreh Deah**, sec. 285, end of par. 1.³⁷ Should you wish to do something about it, you will be well advised to inform yourself on the authority of the author of the Shulchan Aruch, Rabbi Yosef Caro (by means of an encyclopedia and the like) and then apologize to him in a suitable manner. On my part the matter is closed.

With blessing,

³⁷ Quoted in previous letter.

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