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”וכתבתם על מזוזת ביתך ובשעריך...” (דברים י"א כ')

“And you shall inscribe them upon the doorposts of your house and upon your gates...”

Not all rooms of a house or building are obligated in Mezuzah. Since the Torah only requires a Mezuzah on a room used for dwelling, any room used exclusively for another purpose, such as for Kedusha or for unclean purposes is exempt¹. Hence, a Beis Knesses used solely for Davening is exempt². A Beis Medrash used solely for learning is subject to a dispute in the Rishonim. Some Rishonim rule that a Beis Medrash is considered a dwelling since the Talmidim sit there for the entire day³. The Maharam related that when he would rest in the Beis Medrash in the afternoon, a Ruach Raah (Evil Spirit) would disturb him, until he had a Mezuzah installed on the door⁴. Since this matter is subject to dispute, one should affix the mezuzah of a Beis Medrash without a Bracha⁵.

Rooms that are used for unclean functions such as a bathroom are also exempt. Even modern bathrooms (that are part of the house and are clean) are exempt⁶. Similarly, a laundry room that often houses sullied diapers etc. is exempt⁷. Some Poskim state that since nowadays most people do not use cloth diapers that require laundering, a laundry room is not considered unclean and is obligated in Mezuzah⁸. A room that is only used occasionally for unclean purposes is required to have a Mezuzah⁹. In such a case, the Mezuzah should be covered with a double covering whenever unclean functions are being performed there¹⁰. A double covering is defined as two coverings, wherein one of them is not a dedicated covering for the Mezuzah¹¹. Regarding a Mezuzah that is wrapped in paper or plastic and then placed in a Mezuzah case as a double covering, many Poskim are lenient if the Mezuzah case is non-transparent¹². A transparent Mezuzah case should not be used for rooms that have occasional unclean functions¹³.

Another qualification for a room to require a Mezuzah is that it must be 4 Amos by 4 Amos in size¹⁴. The Rishonim dispute if the room must be at least 4 Amos wide and at least 4 Amos long to be obligated, or if it suffices to have a total cumulative area of 4 by 4 Amos (e.g. 2 by 8 Amos)¹⁵. Due to these differing opinions, one should place a Mezuzah on a room that does not have 4 Amos in both dimensions without a Bracha¹⁶. According to R' Moshe Feinstein זצ"ל, 4 Amos is 85 inches. However, one should only recite a Bracha if the room is 89 inches by 89 inches¹⁷. According to R' Chaim Naeh, the room must be 75.59 inches to be obligated in Mezuzah, and 77.16 inches for a Bracha¹⁸. According to the Chazon Ish, one should not make a Bracha unless the room is 91.33 by 91.33 inches¹⁹. Furniture that is used for the function of the room (even if permanently installed) does not deduct from the calculation of the room's dimensions²⁰.

The Poskim cite the opinion of the Chamudei Doniel that although a room smaller than 4 by 4 Amos is not considered a room fit for Mezuzah, if the room is dedicated for a function that is normally served by such a small room, it requires a Mezuzah²¹. The reasoning for this is that a room is only considered too small when it ceases to be useful for the function it was intended. A room that is considered ample for the function that it is utilized, cannot be considered undersized²². Although many Poskim

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concur with this opinion, a Bracha should not be recited on such a room²³. Even according to the Chamudei Doniel, a closet that one does not enter and exit is not considered a room, even though it serves its function²⁴. A walk-in closet that is 4 by 4 Amos, requires a Mezuzah without a Bracha²⁵.

Although the Torah excludes from the Mitzva of Mezuzah rooms that are not used for dwelling (i.e. Beis Haknesses, smaller than 4 Amos etc.), not all rooms that are not actually a dwelling place are excluded. Any room that is a normal part of a dwelling place, such as a play room etc. are also considered places of dwelling.

One of the major discussions in contemporary Poskim is regarding the Halachic status of an elevator. There are two doors that may require a Mezuzah, the door to the elevator shaft, and the door of the elevator car itself. Amongst the Poskim one can find the entire gamut of opinions. Some Poskim require both, others neither, and yet others one or the other. According to R' Moshe Feinstein זצ"ל and R' Shlomo Zalman Aurbach זצ"ל an elevator is completely exempt from Mezuzah on both the shaft and the car. Some Poskim state that the doorway to the shaft on each floor requires a Mezuzah. Others argue that the entranceways to the shaft are useless when the elevator car is not at that floor. According to these Poskim, the doorways on each floor do not require Mezuzos, whereas the elevator car requires a Mezuzah without a Bracha.

A house or room that is rented to a non-Jew is exempt from Mezuzah. If there already is a Mezuzah in place it should be removed. Nevertheless, a room that is dedicated as quarters for a servant or for a live-in maid which are not Jewish, are still obligated in Mezuzah, since it is considered the owner's room that he uses to house his workers. A room used for storage of household items or groceries requires a Mezuzah. A car garage is subject to dispute. According to some Poskim, if is used exclusively for housing vehicles is exempt. If it is also used for storage and is connected to one's house, a Mezuzah should be affixed without a Bracha. If it is not attached to the house it is completely exempt, even when used for storage. Other Poskim argue that any garage that is attached to the house requires a Mezuzah (with a Bracha). If it is not attached to the house a Bracha should not be recited.

גוט שבת,
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