

# On Every Jewish Home

MIVTZA MEZUZAH



לזכות הגה"ח הרב אברהם  
ליב וזוגתו שיחיו שוהאט  
שלוחי כ"ק אדמו"ר למדינת  
ונצואלה מאז שנת תשמ"ה  
לרגל מלאות ארבעים שנה לנישואיהם (יו"ד כסלו  
תשד"מ - תשפ"ד) לאורך ימים ושנים טובות

נדפס ע"י בנם הרה"ח שלום דובער  
ומשפחתו שיחיו שוהאט

COMPILED BY:  
RABBI LEVI GREENBERG  
WRITTEN BY:  
RABBI ZELIG KATZMAN

me



**MEZUZAH.** The mark of a Jewish home. The ageless protection device, reminder and manifestation of Hashem's constant presence. An iconic campaign that epitomized the Rebbe's Mitzvah campaigns.

As we approach the fiftieth birthday of Mitzva Mezuzah, here is the full story of the Rebbe's tireless efforts to bolster worldwide observance of this special Mitzvah. As we all seek to feel more security in challenging times, there is no better time to tell this story and learn its lessons.



## “ES SHTIMT NIT”

In an almost constant refrain throughout the Rebbe's thousands of published letters and *ma'anos* rings the phrase *bedikas hatefillin v'hamezuzos* - check your tefillin and mezuzos. In response to a varied array of troubles, illnesses and quandaries, the Rebbe took a uniform approach: A Jew's worldly condition is inextricably tied to his spiritual state. Hence, when encountering a setback, one must head back to the drawing board and determine whether it is rooted in a spiritual deficiency.

Many miraculous stories involve the Rebbe directing people to check their tefillin and mezuzos in order to resolve various issues. One fellow was instructed by the Rebbe on several occasions to check his tefillin and mezuzos, and when he responded that he had checked them and they had been found to be kosher, the Rebbe - quite uncharacteristically - shook his head and said, “*Es shtimt nit* - it doesn't make sense.”<sup>1</sup> Sometime later, he returned to report that he had discovered the issue...

## THE BIRTH OF A MIVTZA

Although the mitzvah of mezuzah was a key part of the Rebbe's agenda from the beginning of the *nesius*, in earlier years the Rebbe conveyed its importance mostly in private correspondence and *yechidus*'n.

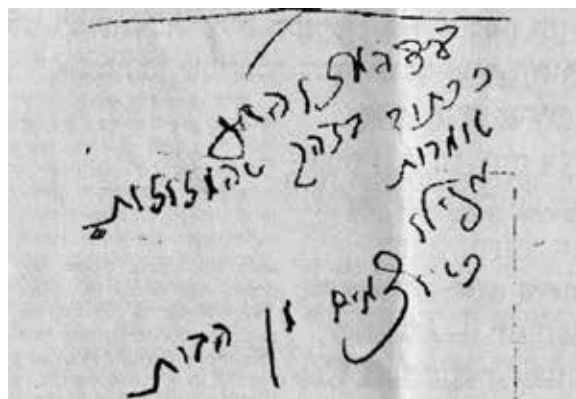
The public push for Mivtza Mezuzah, however, came in the winter of 5734. At the Yud Shevat farbrengen that year, the Rebbe spoke of the need to “bring light into the world” through adding in Torah and mitzvos. The Rebbe specifically highlighted the importance of every home having a *Tzedakah pushka*, a siddur, and a Tehillim (this was soon after the launch of the mitvzoim of *Tzedakah* and *Bayis Malei Sefarim*<sup>2</sup>), and then announced a new Mivtza: Mezuzah. “The place of the mezuzah (like the Menorah) is at the entrance to the home... It serves as a testimony to all who enter and leave the house - even to non-Jews - that the entire house and everything within is permeated with the mezuzah's message, from ‘Shema

Yisroel Hashem Elokeinu Hashem Echad’ to its conclusion, which reiterates Hashem's promise to lengthen our days in the land that Hashem promised us, forever.”

The Rebbe concluded with a call to action: to ensure that every Jewish home, and even every room in the home, has a kosher mezuzah on the doorpost. And since this includes additional expenses, as it is necessary to check the mezuzos to ensure they're kosher, etc., there are Yidden who have already volunteered to participate in the expenses related to the effort to have kosher mezuzos on all the doors of every Jewish home. The best case scenario is when the homeowner recognizes the importance of the mitzvah and willingly pays for the mezuzah. Should they hesitate, however, the Rebbe said that a mezuzah should be given to them for free, or they should at least pay a small sum towards the full cost.<sup>3</sup>

The impetus for this Mivtza seems to have been *b'isarusa dilisata*, spurred by the initiative of Mr. Shabtai Rosenne, an Israeli ambassador who had met the Rebbe in the past. In a letter to him dated 20 Iyar, 5733<sup>4</sup>, the Rebbe confirms receipt of his letter in which he presented a plan for a Mivtza Mezuzah, modeled after Mivtza Tefillin which the Rebbe had launched in Iyar of 5727<sup>5</sup>.

After acknowledging his letter and conveying the hope



THE REBBE WRITES: בדמהזוה"תפ [בדיקת המזוזות והתפילין] ככתוב בזה"ק [בזוהר הקדוש] שהמזוזות ושומרות אפילו כשיוצאים מן הבית



that this idea reflected his general approach of spreading Yiddishkeit proudly, rejecting the ethos of the Maskilim “Be a Jew at home and a (secular) man in the street”, the Rebbe writes that he will reconsider this idea. Reconsider, the Rebbe emphasizes, as this had been tried before but it had encountered much difficulty. A Mivtza Mezuzah would entail much more buy-in from the entire family who dwells in the home and would require someone to go out and meet them there, and so on. Nevertheless, the Rebbe wrote, the fact that this was brought up again *b’hashgacha pratit*, meant that it warrants consideration. The following winter, the Rebbe launched Mivtza Mezuzah, as described above.

Immediately after the farbrengen, Chassidim got to work. On 19 Shevat, a memo was circulated in Eretz Yisroel, containing specific directives that were communicated to Chabad activists by the Rebbe’s *mazkirus* with regard to this Mivtza:

*In order that the Rebbe’s call to install kosher mezuzos in Jewish homes should reach the widest possible audience, the following should be done in Eretz Yisroel:*

1. Contact the heads of schools throughout the country and impress upon them the importance of installing mezuzos in the homes of the students, both for the protection of the students and their proper education in general, even when they are not in school.

2. Reach out to the Rabbonim and encourage them to speak to their congregations about the importance of this mitzvah.

*Those who cannot afford to buy their own mezuzos will be assisted, either through loans or gifts.*<sup>6</sup>

## MEZUZAH IN RESPONSE TO A MASSACRE

It is the eve of 21 Iyar 5734, late Sunday night. Under the cover of darkness, three armed terrorists from the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine cross the Israeli border from Lebanon. Late Tuesday night, on the eve of 23 Iyar, they begin their murderous rampage,



THE REBBE’S EDITS ON THE COVER OF A ‘LEKET’ (COMPILATION) FROM THE SICHA ON SHABBOS MEVORCHIM SIVAN 5734 ON MIVTZA MEZUZA. ON THE TOP RIGHT, THE REBBE ADDED “MOHIR” (URGENT).



FRANTIC PARENTS STAND OUTSIDE AS ISRAELI SPECIAL FORCES STORM THE NETIV MEIR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, ATTEMPTING TO RESCUE THE HOSTAGES.

shooting at whichever civilians they encounter, leaving a bloody trail in their wake.

They arrive at the Netiv Meir Elementary school at 4 am. 102 students and four teachers from a high school in Tzfas are inside sleeping, spending the night there as part of a three day school trip. The terrorists storm the building



and take 89 people hostage. The rest manage to escape.

The terrorists sent word to the Israeli government of their list of demands, which included the release of a large number of terrorists. As the negotiations dragged on, the government was getting ready to dispatch a unit of special ops soldiers of the Sayeret Matkal to rescue the hostages.

But the mission meant to safely resolve this situation ended in tragedy. As the soldiers stormed the building that afternoon, the terrorists realized what was happening and began to indiscriminately shoot at the hostages. After the dust settled and the terrorists were eliminated, there were 20 casualties and close to 70 wounded. A cloud of mourning descended across the country and throughout the Jewish world.

The following Shabbos was Shabbos Mevorchim Sivan. As usual, the Rebbe held a farbrengen that week. In the first *sicha*<sup>7</sup>, the Rebbe addressed the fresh and searing tragedy in a pained tone. The Rebbe cited the words of

the Rambam at the beginning of Hilchos Taanis, that when a calamity befalls the Jewish people, it is imperative that we look inwards and rectify our own deficiencies in Torah and mitzvos, instead of refusing to engage in this introspection and instead blame the occurrence on chance or natural causes.

The Rebbe continued that sometimes much effort is needed to know which area needs our focus; however, in this case, Hashem clearly showed *hashgacha pratis*:

The Rebbe shared that a chossid in Tzfas had called, and reported that he had checked the mezuzos of the school in which the children studied, and found that all 17 were *possul*, a number which corresponded to the official number of victims that was announced. When the newspapers publicized the next day that the amount of casualties was greater, the Rebbe asked to “inquire once again regarding the amount of mezuzos”. Upon further investigation, it was discovered that there were more



THE REBBE WAVES IN ENCOURAGEMENT TO THE BOCHURIM HEADING OUT TO MITVZOIM ON THE NEW “MITZVAH TANKS” ON 7 TAMMUZ 5734



rooms with four additional mezuzos. Two of them were definitely *possul*, and the other two were questionably *possul*!

In a rare and remarkable comment, the Rebbe explained his recent launch of Mivtza Mezuzah. “In recent times I had a strong *koch* in Mivtza Mezuzah. **I myself did not understand the reason for it, but I was pushed incessantly to talk about Mivtza Mezuzah.**” The Rebbe did not specify who or what it was that “pushed him”, but the language points to some degree of supernatural foresight, a rare admission on the Rebbe’s part.

The Rebbe continued, “I provided reasoning, beginning with the idea of ‘*Shomer Dalsos Yisroel*’ etc. But why specifically mezuzah? There are many other mitzvos, and each mitzvah has a special *segula* (though this is not the reason to fulfill the mitzvos, we fulfill them because they are Hashem’s commands). Now it is clearly evident how this event relates to the Mitzvah of mezuzah, whose *segula* is to bring protection!”

The Rebbe called upon Rabbonim and educators to speak out about the importance of mezuzah, specifically addressing those who would be reluctant to follow his lead: “Anyone who looks in Chumash, sees that in both paragraphs of *Krias Shema* which they recite twice daily, it says “*U’chsavtom al mezuzos*”. The fact that the mezuzah effects “ה’ יומר צאתך ובוואך” — it extends Hashem’s protection over a person both when he is in his home and when he is not — is clearly stated in the Zohar!”

In the next *sicha*, the Rebbe asked what connection there could be between putting up a mezuzah in *chutz la’aretz* and protecting Yidden in Eretz Yisroel? On a simple level, the protection a mezuzah provides is for the people that live in that house! The Rebbe explained this based on Perek 32 in Tanya, that ‘אב אחד לכולנה - all *neshamos* have one father,’ which means that all Yidden are really one, *achdus yisroel*. Hence, when a *yid* fulfills the mitzvah of mezuzah in *chutz la’aretz*, it brings protection and healing for the Yidden in Eretz Yisroel as well.

This idea was repeated in several *sichos* and letters the Rebbe wrote in the following months and years. For example, in a letter to *N’shei U’bnos Yisroel* on Rosh Chodesh Elul 5736<sup>8</sup>, the Rebbe writes: “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 everyone 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.”

The Rebbe clarified on the next Shabbos, Parshas Bamidbar, 4 Sivan<sup>9</sup>, that he did not mean to suggest that the



A BROCHURE FOR THE MEZUZAH CAMPAIGN IN THE EARLY YEARS OF THE MITZVA.

RASKIN FAMILY ARCHIVES



UNDER THE AUSPICES OF LUBAVITCH YOUTH ORGANIZATION, BOCHURIM MAN A MITZVAH TANK ON THE STREETS OF MANHATTAN IN THE SUMMER OF 5734. NOTE THE LOGO OF MIVTZA MEZUZAH WITH THE INSCRIPTION “GUARDIAN OF ISRAEL”.

JEM YOSSIELMAN VIA JEM 12/9/15



tragedy was caused by shortcomings in the mitvzoim. The Rebbe gave the analogy of a soldier in war: A soldier wears a helmet to protect himself from the enemy's bullets. Nevertheless, when a soldier is wounded or [worse] by the enemy while failing to wear a helmet, it is obviously caused by the enemy's bullets, though were he to wear a helmet, it would protect him. The Rebbe went on to give a strong *hisorerus* and essentially inaugurate the existing five mitvzoim as a unit: Tefillin, Torah, Mezuzah, Tzedakah, and (Bayis Malei) Sefarim.

## CHASSIDIM IMPLEMENT THE MIVTZA

The next day, on Erev Shavuos, the Rebbe unexpectedly went to the Ohel. On the way the Rebbe edited the *sicha* of the previous day, a task which he finished while standing inside the Ohel! The Rebbe handed the pages to Rabbi Krinsky, who immediately phoned Vaad L'Hafotzas Sichos to relay the edits, so that the *Sicha* could be printed before Yom Tov and its message shared on *tahalucha*.

For many years, especially since the onset of Mivtza Tefillin before the Six Day War in 5727, it was routine for *bochurim* to venture out on mitvzoim when there was no *sefer hayeshiva*. These activities were coordinated and supported by Tzach<sup>10</sup>, which was responsible for all outreach work in the New York area.

After the powerful *sichos* about mitvzoim during the recent farbrengens, Reb Dovid Raskin — *menahel* of Tzach as well as member of the *hanhala* of the yeshiva in 770 — suggested that this was not enough. A rotation of groups of *bochurim* needed to be on the streets doing mitvzoim every day.

On Wednesday, 15 Sivan, the Rebbe returned from the Ohel and held a surprise farbrengen.<sup>11</sup> Its purpose was so that the Rebbe could directly communicate the importance of strengthening the mitvzoim to those listening remotely via hookup. The Rebbe announced that any child that would get more involved in mitvzoim, wherever they

were in the world, would receive a bill or coin of the local currency from the Rebbe.

Many members of *anash* joined the mitvzoim activities and Tzach's main office was busy 24 hours a day. Brochures were distributed about the importance of checking mezuzos and putting up kosher ones. Dozens of people would call Tzach's phone number (which was on the brochure) requesting home visits to check their mezuzos and a team of *bochurim* was tasked with doing the house calls.

Mivtzoim was reaching a fever pitch, but there was much more to come.

One day that week, as the *bochurim* were out on the streets doing mitvzoim, their activities were interrupted by heavy rain. Several *bochurim* came up with the idea of renting moving trucks and outfitting them with a table and two benches. This way people could be invited onto the truck and do mitzvot, regardless of the weather.

Renting trucks from U-Haul and Ryder, they repurposed them as "Mitzvah Tanks", revolutionizing the way mitvzoim was done. They covered the trucks with slogans like "Mitzvos on the spot for people on the go", and outfitted their interiors with mezuzos, tefillin and *seforim*. These iconic "tanks against assimilation", as the Rebbe dubbed them, were sent out to the frontlines of New York City to conquer the battle for the Jewish soul and Jewish survival, at this critical juncture in Jewish history.<sup>12</sup>

The first "tanks" left 770 on Erev Shabbos, 17 Sivan, 5734. The success was immediate, and by Sunday the fleet had doubled in size.

A few days after they launched, the Rebbe wrote an encouraging response to a *duch* of mitvzoim: "נת' ות"ח" - ת"ח. ואשרי חלקם. ויה"ר שיקוים בכל המתעסקים במבצעים אלה - האנשים והנשים והטף - שליט"א: מי שיש לו מנה רוצה כו' ארבע - [The report] was received; many thanks, many thanks. Fortunate is their lot. May it be Hashem's will that it be fulfilled by all those involved in these mitvzoim—men, women and children—*shlita*: He who has one hundred wants [two hundred] etc. four hundred etc. I will mention it at the *tziyun*."

On Sunday 26 Sivan, Reb Dovid Raskin called a meeting to discuss how they would go about actualizing the Rebbe's call for increased involvement in mitvzoim. (At





THE REBBE SPEAKS AT THE FARBRENGEN OF 13 TAMMUZ 5736

JEM VOSSI MELAMED VIA JEM 12/9/15

the farbrengen the day before, the Rebbe actually gave the *mezonos* on his table to be distributed at the meeting.)

Reb Dovid wrote a report of the meeting to the Rebbe, saying that it was decided that on Motzei Shabbos there would be a community-wide meeting about mitvzoim to encourage *anash* to participate and to donate money as well. The participants in this meeting each donated \$202, the *gematria* of 'מבצע'. Soon thereafter, Rabbi Groner came out of the Rebbe's room to deliver the Rebbe's response to Reb Dovid. The Rebbe commented on their plan for an additional meeting: "הרי עד אז יכולת ואפשר להמבצעים — שליט"א לכבוש נ.י. וסביבותי' ובדרכי נועם ושלום הר יעד אז יכולת ואפשר להמבצעים" — Until then, those going on mitvzoim can conquer New York and its surroundings, in a pleasant and peaceful manner!" The Rebbe also enclosed a contribution of \$267 (the *gematria* of מבצע מזוזה) to the campaign. The unique expression in this note infused the *bochurim* with unprecedented enthusiasm.

Chassidim also took advantage of the unique opportunities inherent in the Mivtza. Whereas the other mitvzoim might entail only a brief encounter on the street, Mivtza Mezuzah enables a chossid to create a real relationship with the Yid they are helping. Coming into people's homes and installing Mezuzos lays the groundwork for a close

relationship which can encourage the entire family to continue growing in their *Shmiras haMitzvos*. One such instance was recounted by Reb Shmulik Brook, who was deeply involved in Mivtza Mezuzah for many years. "My friend met a secular Israeli man who was dating a Jewish American girl. The man wanted his girlfriend to learn a bit more about Yiddishkeit so he had us come and put up mezuzos in her house. Ultimately they grew in their learning about Yiddishkeit, and today, he is living in South Africa with Chassidishe children and grandchildren..."

Rabbi Brook shared more about his involvement in Mivtza Mezuzah. "In 5739, after I got married, Reb Avrohom Moshe Deitsch and I decided that we wanted to get involved in mitvzoim. We went to Reb Dovid Raskin and offered to take over the operation of Mivtza Mezuzah (which had declined since the original *koch*). He accepted our offer and we began to work out of my apartment. Tzach would provide us with a list of names of people who had requested to buy Mezuzos or get theirs checked, and we would send out *yungeleit* (many would go together with their wives) who volunteered to help put up and check mezuzos." After moving to several different locations, the headquarters of this Mivtza (now run by Reb Shmulik Kesselman) moved to the basement of Reb





Zalman Deitch, where it continues today. To contact the office, call (718) 774-1780.

## SUMMER OF 5734

On Shabbos Parshas Korach, the Rebbe held an unscheduled farbrengen.<sup>13</sup> The reason for this unusual step was to display appreciation for those who had tirelessly dedicated themselves to the implementation of the recently launched mitvzoim and “especially Mivtza Mezuzah, which we see has been received very well. There are those who have taken upon themselves to get involved in the mitvzoim, and they do so energetically, they have thus ‘earned themselves’ a farbrengen this Shabbos, which is a completely unusual thing. [The purpose of this farbrengen] is to thank [them for what they have done until now] and to encourage and strengthen them to continue and to engage in the mitvzoim even more, with even more energy and vitality than they have displayed until now.”

The Rebbe added that if this farbrengen would cause even one Jew to add in his involvement in the mitvzoim, it would have been worth it!

Highlighting the uniqueness of this Mitzvah, the

Rebbe cited the words of the Mittlerer Rebbe in the Sidur<sup>14</sup> that the Mitzvah of Mezuzah “encompasses all of the Mitzvos,” which is greater even than Chazal’s terminology about Tefillin. The Rebbe also mentioned the famous story of Onkelos the Ger,<sup>15</sup> which demonstrates the power of the mezuzah to overcome *klipah*, to such a degree that the representatives of the Roman emperor converted to Yiddishkeit. This immediate “real world” effect of transforming darkness to light is a property of this special Mitzvah.

The Rebbe’s drive to ensure that every Jew had a kosher mezuzah intensified throughout the summer months. In a telegram dated Friday 15 Tammuz<sup>16</sup>, the Rebbe used the rare term “*bakasha nafshis*” in reference to this campaign, urging “all those who cherish our Torah, heed the mitzvos, and even those who merely carry the title ‘Jew’” to “intensify their efforts in all the mitvzoim, beginning with Mivtza Mezuzah - even before the onset of the Three Weeks...”

On Shabbos Parshas Balak, the Rebbe again spoke passionately about the mitvzoim, especially Mivtza Mezuzah, and offered a beautiful explanation on the significance of the new “Tanks” that had been dispatched.<sup>17</sup>

## DEFENDING MIVTZA MEZUZAH

Like many of the Rebbe’s campaigns, this Mivtza was met with fierce opposition by many in the Frum world who raised various “holy” objections to the Rebbe’s approach. The Rebbe responded publicly to these arguments, proving the legitimacy of the Mivtza from Torah sources.

In response to the Rebbe’s words about the protection that a Mezuzah affords the Jewish home and its inhabitants, detractors quoted the Rambam<sup>18</sup> who decried the use of Mitzvos as “*segulos*” and devices for protection as opposed to recognizing them simply as fulfillment of Hashem’s will.

The Rebbe explained that while the Rambam indeed rules that way, the Shulchan Aruch of the Beis Yosef omits



BOCHURIM ENGAGE YIDDEN ON “MIVTZOIM” IN THE SUMMER OF 5736.



that line, stating only that one who is careful in the mitzvah of mezuzah will have long life (based on the words of the *posuk* “*Lmaan yirbu yemeichem...*”). The Beis Yosef certainly saw the words of the Rambam but nevertheless chose to leave them out of his ruling.<sup>19</sup>

Others claimed that the Rebbe’s directive to check mezuzos and tefillin frequently contradicted an explicit Halacha in Shulchan Aruch<sup>20</sup>, which states that one should check their mezuzos twice in seven years, and tefillin (in certain cases) never need to be checked. The Rebbe reconciled his position with this Halacha in several ways:

1. That *pesak* is only applicable to cases in which there is no doubt regarding the kashrus of the mezuzah. The Shulchan Aruch, however, does not discuss cases where it is doubtful if there’s even something inside the case, or whether the mezuzah is written on parchment or on paper. The Rebbe said that someone wrote to him that they found a parchment scroll with *Birchas Kohanim* written on it... Moreover, there are forged mezuzos being sold everywhere. Under these circumstances, more frequent *bedikos* are entirely warranted.

2. The methods used to process parchment have evolved significantly from the time of the Gemara. One manner of processing causes the ink to last longer, and another way of processing causes it to be weaker and last a much shorter time than it would have in the time of the Gemara.

3. Finally, the “Matei Efraim”, a great Talmid Chacham who was very involved in the field of practical Halacha, nevertheless ruled<sup>21</sup> that one should check their tefillin and mezuzos every Elul!<sup>22</sup>

On another occasion<sup>23</sup>, the Rebbe responded to those who claimed that it is more important to focus on Mitzvos which are based “*bein adam lachaveiro*” (with humanitarian benefit). “The *bochurim* who give up their free time to engage in mitzvot have limited ability to promote those Mitzvos. On the other hand, the Rov who raised this criticism actually leads a shul made up mostly of businesspeople, whom he sees every Shabbos. He has plenty of time to engage and explain, with the hope that he will be able to influence his congregants to be vigilant about *Hasagas Gevul*, *Lashon Hara*, *Motzi Shem Ra*, and

giving *Ma’aser* and *Chomesh!*”

The Rebbe also questioned the sincerity of these critics, pointing out that if they were truly concerned about the neglect of these mitzvot, why had they waited till now to raise their criticisms? The Rebbe concluded that he would have preferred not to address these issues, and was speaking out only to mitigate the *agmas nefesh* that these criticisms caused the *bochurim* who devoted themselves tirelessly to these campaigns.

## ENTEBBE AND ITS AFTERMATH

In the summer of 5736, the Rebbe reinvigorated this campaign with a new sense of urgency, in light of the events that had transpired.

On 29 Sivan, a routine flight from Tel Aviv to Paris was hijacked by Palestinian terrorists during a stopover in Athens, Greece. They diverted the flight to Entebbe, Uganda, then under the military dictatorship of the infamous Idi Amin, who was sympathetic to the Palestinian cause and agreed to harbor the terrorists and their hostages. The non-Jewish passengers were released. The remaining 94 Jewish passengers and the 12 member flight crew remained in captivity as the hijackers engaged in negotiations with international authorities. As the negotiations dragged on and the terrorists declared their untenable demands, the Israeli government began to plan a military option to rescue the hostages.

On 6 Tammuz, Israeli special forces embarked on a rescue operation. As the world waited with bated breath to determine the ultimate fate of the hostages, they flew to Entebbe under the cover of darkness, stormed the airport and rescued the hostages. Although three hostages and one soldier were tragically killed, it was a remarkably successful operation.<sup>24</sup>

At the farbrengen on 13 Tammuz<sup>25</sup>, the Rebbe proclaimed the operation to be an open miracle, and at that and subsequent farbrengens<sup>26</sup>, addressed the lessons that could be learned from the incident. The ease with which the hijacking took place, the ability of a huge group



of soldiers to fly undetected, and the low casualties all pointed to an element of *hashgacha pratis*. It was a clear message from above.

The Rebbe spoke of the need to strengthen *shmiras hamitzvos* in general, but focused on Mivtza Mezuzah, saying: “One area of Torah and mitzvos that is specifically related to security is mezuzah. We see this clearly, for on the outside of the mezuzah the letters of Hashem’s name י-ד-ש are written. They stand for ‘שומר דלתות’ - ישראל - Guardian of the doors of Yisroel.” The Rebbe also cited the Zohar on the *possuk* of וּבֹאֵךְ וְיִשְׁמַר צֵאתְךָ וְיִשְׁמַר יְשִׁירָא - about the protection of mezuzah. The Rebbe continued “...The mezuzah doesn’t only watch over the person who has it on their house, but every additional mezuzah adds to the protection of the Jewish nation as a whole. Therefore *every single person should check their mezuzos*.”

The Rebbe continued that this is especially true with regard to the soldiers. Every soldier involved in the operation should check their mezuzos, and make sure that they have a mezuzah on every door that requires one.

“Furthermore, since the Jewish nation is all together on the same ‘ship’, the mezuzah of every single Jew adds to the security of the Jewish nation. Therefore, every person has the responsibility to reach as many Jews as possible, wherever they may be, to ensure that they have kosher mezuzos on every door. In addition, the freed hostages should check their mezuzos to see if they are kosher, and to publicize the results. The point isn’t to catch them on a mistake; rather, seeing the results will give everyone else a sense of urgency to check their mezuzos as well.”

The Rebbe later said that it turned out that all of the hostages who checked found some problem with their mezuzos. This only added to the urgency of the previous request. Every hostage had the holy obligation to check their mezuzos and publicize the results, in order that everyone else would see the importance of having kosher mezuzos, and strengthen their own spiritual security.

In a letter from Rosh Chodesh Elul of that year<sup>27</sup>, the Rebbe clarified his message: “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.” 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 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).”

“Moreover, this protection embraces the members of the household also when they go out of the house...”

## MEZUZOS AROUND THE WORLD

After the launch of Mivtza Mezuzah, the Rebbe worked incessantly to ensure that Jews had access to mezuzos wherever they found themselves.

In a letter dated 10 Teves 5736, Rabbi David Moshe Rosen, Chief Rabbi of the Soviet Republic of Romania, wrote to the Rebbe, saying that he had distributed the mezuzos that the Rebbe had sent for the Jews in Romania and requesting that more be sent.

The Rebbe replied on 25 Teves<sup>28</sup>: “Thank you for the good news about the distribution of mezuzos etc. and understandably, I will try to obtain more, *bli neder*, and you will probably let me know...how to deliver them to you.”

In answer to a Rov who was traveling to Germany, the Rebbe wrote<sup>29</sup>: “It is advisable that you bring along many **checked** mezuzos”. The Rebbe also advised him to be in touch with people in the area who were active in spreading Torah and Mitzvos, and to assist them.

Additionally, during the years 5736-7, the Rebbe led a clandestine campaign to install thousands of mezuzos at IDF bases across Eretz Yisroel. Aguch in Eretz Yisroel sent people to install these mezuzos, with most of the expenses covered by the Rebbe himself.<sup>30</sup>

The following are excerpts from a *duch* written to the Rebbe by Reb Efraim Wolf on 11 Tammuz 5736: “Yesterday morning Reb Shlomo Maidanchik called Rabbi Piron [Chief Rabbi of the IDF at the time] and set a time to meet... We read the Rebbe’s letter to him... He fully



admits that the entire strength of this campaign is thanks to the Rebbe. Initially he was embarrassed by the existing situation [regarding mezuzos in the army] but he started to pressure [the relevant authorities] and now the stream of mezuzos is strengthening.

As of now, they have put up around forty or fifty thousand mezuzos, and it is an endless job... Today the situation of mezuzos [in the army] is far from worrisome, and soldiers themselves refuse to dwell in a base that has no mezuzah...

Another account of this Mivtza was related by Reb Yisroel Glitzenstein: "In 5737, on a phone call with Reb Efraim Wolf, he said to me: 'The Rebbe wants there to be Mivtza Mezuzah on all of the army bases, are you willing to participate in Eilat and the surrounding areas?' The Rebbe asked that this be conducted secretly.

"Being that I was responsible for mivtzoim in the area, I immediately consented.

"We had to visit all of the bases, take down all the mezuzos and check them. The kosher ones we put back up. With regard to the *possule* mezuzos and the doors that needed mezuzos but had none — the Rebbe provided new

ones [for us to put up]...

"The great enthusiasm and cooperation with the different commanders and soldiers at the various bases was remarkable..."

## CHAIN REACTION

The Rebbe famously explained that doing mivtzoim, reaching out to fellow Yidden in the hope to influence them to perform even one mitzvah, has the potential to transform the other person. In addition to the fact that every mitzvah has infinite value in and of itself, Chazal tell us that "*mitzvah goreres mitzvah*," one mitzvah leads to another.

When it comes to Mivtza Mezuzah, the mitzvah has an even greater impact. Mezuzah is said to have the power to weaken a person's *yetzer hara*, thereby allowing the inner will of his *neshama* — to fulfill all of the mitzvos — to shine.<sup>31</sup>

In this sense, Mivtza Mezuzah is the quintessential of all the mivtzoim, and an overall potent one. **T**

1. <https://videos.jem.tv/video-player?clip=173>.

2. For more on Mivtza Bayis Malei Sefarim, see "Redefining the Home" - Derher Teves 5777.

3. Toras Menachem vol. 75 pg. 146-147.

4. Igros Kodesh vol. 28 pg 207.

5. For more on Mivtza Tefillin, see "Reconnecting" - Derher Iyar 5777.

6. Yemei Temimim vol. 6 pg. 24-25.

7. Toras Menachem vol. 76 pg. 173 and on.

8. Likkutei Sichos vol. 14 pg. 204.

9. Likkutei Sichos vol. 13 pg. 211-212.

10. For more about this organization, see "The Story of Tzach in the USA" - Derher Menachem Av 5779.

11. Toras Menachem vol. 76 pg. 309 and on.

12. For the complete story of the Mivtza Tanks, see "Are You a Tankist?" - Derher Kislev 5780.

13. Toras Menachem vol. 76 pg. 369 and on.

14. Siddur Im Dach, Shaar Hachanukah pg. 275a. [See also Ramban end of Parshas Bo].

15. Gemara Avodah Zarah 11a.

16. Likkutei Sichos vol. 13 pg. 210.

17. Toras Menachem vol. 77 pg. 10.

18. Hilchos Mezuzah 5,4.

19. Shavuos 5734; Toras Menachem vol. 76 pg. 266-267. See at length regarding this Rambam in Likkutei Sichos vol. 19, Ekev 5.

20. Orach Chayim end of Siman 39.

21. Matei Efraim Orach Chayim Siman 581 Seif 10.

22. Chof Menachem Av 5734; Toras Menachem vol. 77 pg. 175-176.

23. Rosh Chodesh Iyar 5735; Toras Menachem vol. 80 pg. 140-141.

24. For a comprehensive overview of the Entebbe Operation, see "Against All Odds" - Derher Sivan 5775.

25. Sichos Kodesh 5736 vol. 2 pg. 414.

26. Ibid. p. 408-433; 457-464; 470-480; 510; 542-543; 547-550; 577; 602-607.

27. Likkutei Sichos vol. 14 pg 203-204.

28. Igros Kodesh vol. 31 pg. 95.

29. Ibid. pg. 157.

30. For the following see Yemei Temimim vol. 7 page 20-22.

31. Likkutei Sichos vol. 13 p. 214.

