



JEWES AND JUDAISM
BY BARUCH LEVINGER
 RELIGIOUS EDITOR

Mitzvah of Mezuzah

"And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates."
 (Deut. 6:9, 11:20)

The Mitzvah of Mezuzah clearly illustrates that not only is a synagogue or other place of worship and study, holy -- but also one's home can be, and should be, a holy sanctuary.

The sanctity of the Jewish home is symbolized by a Mezuzah, a small parchment scroll, handwritten, in a specially prescribed manner and affixed to the right doorpost of every room within the Jewish home. It also attests to G-d's watchful care over the house and all that is in it, reminding both dwellers and visitors, at the very entrance, that -- "this house is a sanctuary of the Al-mighty."

The Mezuzah contains two Biblical passages which mention this Divine commandment: "Shema" and "Vehaya" (Deut. 6:4-9; 11:13-21).

"Shema" declares the unity of the One G-d, and our sacred, eternal duty to serve Him, and only Him.

"Vehaya" expresses G-d's assurance to us of reward that will follow our observance of the Torah's precepts, and warns of retribution for disobedience to them.

On the reverse side of the parchment the Divine Name -- SHA-DAI -- appears. This is also an acrostic for the Hebrew words meaning "Guardian of the houses of Israel."

SOME THINGS TO REMEMBER

Not only the front door, but also all doors leading into rooms which measure at least four square cubits (1 cubit - approx. 18.9 inches) require a Mezuzah. If the room has an area of 16 square cubits, a Mezuzah should be affixed without reciting the blessing.

A bathroom is exempt from a Mezuzah. A rented apartment or house (not in Eretz Israel) does not require a Mezuzah until 30 days have passed. In Eretz Israel, a Mezuzah is required immediately.

If there is no door but an archway, a Mezuzah should be affixed without reciting the blessing.

Mezuzahs should be examined at least twice in seven years, though it is advisable to have them checked more often by a duly qualified scribe.

It is customary to put the right hand on the Mezuzah and kiss it both upon entering and leaving the house.

JERUSALEM (WNS)
 -- Israel appears assured of a supply of oil even if the new government of Iran goes ahead as expected and discontinues providing it with petroleum.

Dr. Shapur Bakhtiar, who is expected to be confirmed as Iran's new Prime Minister, said Jan. 3 in Teheran that his government will refuse to sell oil to Israel and South Africa. "Given the conflict that opposes us in a religious context to Israel, and in another context to South Africa, I think my government will not sell oil to either country, he told a press conference. Israel has been receiving from 60 to 80 percent of its oil from Iran.

In Washington, Energy Secretary James Schlesinger said Jan. 3 that the United States will honor its agreement to provide oil to Israel if Israel's supply situation is affected by the Iranian situation. The U.S. pledged, as part of the 1975 Sinai accord to ensure that Israel's oil needs are met. Schlesinger noted that "There is a possibility of the export of north slope (Alaska) oil to Israel to alleviate the situation."

Energy Minister Yitzhak Modai has said that Israel's oil supply is not presently in danger. Israel has large reserves and is making up the cutoff from Iran with increased production in the Sinai oilfields and purchases from Mexico.

Meanwhile, there is growing concern in Israel about the fate of Jews living in Iran. The Jewish Agency has eased its immigration procedures to facilitate

aliya from Iran. But so far not many Iranian Jews are immigrating here and some officials are concerned that they may wait until it is too late.

Jewish Agency Treasurer Akiva Lewinsky drew a parallel between the Iranian Jews and Jews in Germany after the rise of Nazism. "Most Iranian Jews are trying to convince themselves that the talk against Israel and Zionism has nothing to do with them as Jews," Lewinsky told a Labor Zionist youth seminar. He urged Iranian Jews to immigrate to Israel as quickly as possible.

Likud MK Moshe Katzav, who visited Iran, said he "feared it is too late" for Iranian Jews to come to Israel. He said he

found widespread anti-Semitism in many Iranian cities. But Jewish Agency Chairman Leon Dulzin told Katzav that the Jewish Agency was taking energetic action, but he could not elaborate on it.

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