SELIHOT and the secret of the Mezuza

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Yesterday we mentioned the poem “Ben adam ma lekha nirdam” which is about “waking up.” We explained that the idea of waking up is, on the one hand, practical, as in the month of Elul in Sephardic communities we wake up every morning an hour earlier to say Selihot.

We also said that the deeper meaning of this “awakening” relates to waking up from spiritual lethargy or forgetfulness. It is not uncommon, unfortunately, that we suffer from a spiritual asleep. And it is very easy to detect when the neshama, our soul is not awake or active. Just analyze your own thoughts: if you are not thinking about God and about the meaning of your life, it is because you are “asleep”.

In his book Mishne Tora , Maimonides refers twice to this spiritual lethargy. The second time, when he speaks of the Shofar (BH we will see this later on). And the first time, when he discusses Mezuza . Let’s see.
Maimonides states that certain Mitsvot act as protecting or guardian angels . One of these Mitsvot is the Mezuzah. But what kind of protection grants us the Mezuza? Protection against oblivion. We live very busy lives. We are flooded with all kinds of worries and distractions. Countless material needs that need to be fulfilled urgently. Bills to pay, debts, work, competition, etc. All this demands our full attention NOW. We become so distracted taking care of these urgent matters that we forget the most important: the purpose of our existence.
Obviously, the meaning of life is only relevant for those of us who believe in God. If an individual believes that we are

in this world because of a cosmic accident, he is not going to be thinking about the question of “Purpose”, he would simply go ahead doing what he has to do to survive.
However, when a person knows that God created us, he also knows that he has done so with a purpose. And living with this purpose in mind (or looking and searching for this purpose) it is what gives meaning to our lives.
Can you imagine a person who believes in God and yet he or she is so absorbed in material distractions that forgets thinking about what is life’s ultimate goal? This is virtually spiritual suicide. A tragedy.

For Maimonides the Mezuza protects us from such “tragedies”. Every time we enter or leave a room, every time we go through a door, or from one side to another, the presence of the Mezuza forces us to stop and observe or touch the Mezuza and remember our Creator. The Mezuza helps us to regain consciousness of the purpose of our life and to differentiate between what is urgent and what is really important.

Maimonides explicitly mentions this quality of the Mezuza. In Hilkhot Mezuza 6:13, he says. “A person must show great care in [the fulfillment of the Mitsva of] Mezuza. Each time a person enters or leaves [a room with a Mezuza], he will encounter the name of God [and remember Him]. And then, he will wake up from his sleep and realize his obsession with worldly concerns and recognize that there is nothing that lasts forever except the knowledge of the Creator of the world. This will motivate him to regain consciousness [of his purpose in life] and thus he will direct himself in the paths of righteousness. ”
Maimonides considers that the Mezuza (and the Tefilin and the Tsitsit) is an angel of protection. Protection from forgetting our true mission in life. “These [Mitsvot] are the angels that prevent a person from falling into sin, as it is written [Tehillim 34: 8]” “The angel of God is around those who fear Him, and protects them.”