



Ask The Rabbi

Researched at Ohr Somayach, Jerusalem

This Issue Contains:

1. Doorway Disputes
2. Yiddle Riddle



Name@Withheld wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

I will be moving into a home that is presently occupied by Jewish people. I know that one can not take the mezuzot down if you know that the new occupants are Jewish. The wife called me to ask me to bring 9 mezuzot to replace the 9 she is taking with her. Since she has expensive mezuzot (\$60 each) she figures I'd rather replace them than pay for them. She is correct, especially since I already own a few.

My question is this:

There will be a few weeks between the time they leave and I move in when the painters will be painting. I would prefer not putting up my mezuzot until after they have painted and I can buy nice mezuzot covers. The wife prefers that my mezuzot be up when she takes hers down. Do I have time or must I do as she says? Can the mezuzot be wrapped in plastic and put up with tape rather than with a proper cover and nails until I move in? And what if I said I couldn't pay for her mezuzot, can she still take them?

Dear Name@Withheld,

Yes, you have time: Before you move in you have no obligation at all to put up *mezuzot*, and you don't need to comply with the request of the current occupants.

But you are a nice person and you want something tactful to tell them. If you simply 'show them the door' they may 'go through the roof,' and your relationship will surely be 'out the window.' So I suggest you tell them the following:

Generally, when moving out of a house it's forbidden to remove the *mezuzot* if a Jewish person will be moving in. This is based on an incident in the Talmud where a person moved out, took his *mezuzot*, and as a result, ended up burying his wife and two sons.

But the Poskim qualify this rule: One may take down the *mezuzot* if he needs them and the new tenant is not going to pay for them.

That's the case here: They need the *mezuzot* and you don't want to pay for them. Therefore, the present occupants need not worry about removing them.

Furthermore, you said the house is going to be painted. Before painting, it's recommended that the *mezuzot* be removed so they don't get damaged. Once the current occupants remove the *mezuzot* for a permitted reason -- i.e., painting -- the unoccupied home may remain 'mezuzot-less' until you move in.

If for some reason you decide to put up the *mezuzot* before you move in, don't say the blessing since the *mitzvah* doesn't apply yet. Later, when you move in, remove the *mezuzot*, say the blessing, and put it back up. Tape or glue may be used to affix the *mezuzot*.

People experiencing difficulties often check that their *mezuzot* are Kosher and properly affixed on *all* their doorposts. I remember when my neighbor Harry (the Heretic) noticed that his kids were all becoming very religious -- he didn't know what to do. A local rabbi heard of the problem and suggested "Check your *mezuzot*. Maybe they're Kosher!"

Sources:

- Tractate *Bava Metzia* 102a
- *Shulchan Aruch*, *Yoreh De'ah* 291:2
- *Yesodei Yeshurun*, *Ma'arechet Beit Haknesset* 2, citing the *Atzei Zayit*

Yiddle Riddle:

Question? Which Tractate of the Talmud fits the following description: The Aramaic translation of the name of **this** Tractate is the name of a **different** Tractate?

Answer! Tractate *Kelayim* -- which teaches forbidden mixtures of plants. The verse says: "Don't plant *kelayim* in your field..." (Leviticus 19:19). *Targum Onkelos* translates the word 'kelayim' into Aramaic as 'erubin' (mixtures). *Eruvin* is the name of a different Tractate that teaches the laws of carrying items on Shabbat from one halachic domain to another. An *Eruv* 'mixes' two domains into one, thereby permitting 'carrying' inside the *Eruv*.

(first sent in by Mordechai Perlman <aw004@freenet.toronto.on.ca>)

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