

Publication: Ynet (online)  
Date: 04.03.2020  
1/3

## Chief rabbi: Don't kiss mezuzahs due to coronavirus

The Conference of European Rabbis releases similar precautions for its communities on the continent, urging other religious leaders and their flocks to follow orders and keep up with hygienically measures

Kobi Nachshoni, Itamar Eichner | Published: 03.04.20 , 16:44   

Chief Rabbi of Israel David Lau called on the public on Wednesday to refrain from kissing or touching mezuzahs, due to the spread of the coronavirus.

- Follow Ynetnews on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#)

"During these days, when we are witness to the spread of a serious disease, there is no doubt that one should not kiss the mezuzah or touch it at all," said Lau.



Chief Rabbi of Israel David Lau (Photo: OROT.tv)

In an advisory published in the Israeli media on Wednesday, the chief rabbi



Publication: Ynet (online)  
Date: 04.03.2020  
2/3

said there was no religious obligation to observe the practice, and it was enough for Jews to reflect on the scroll's message when entering or leaving a home.

The handwritten parchment contains the Biblical "Shema" prayer verse that declares: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is One."

"When people became aware of the hygienical risk involved, even as back as the 19th century, other rabbis proclaimed that there is an inherent danger in the practice; among them my teacher, Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach," said Lau.



President Reuven Rivlin places a Mezuzah in a school near the Gaza border (File)  
(Photo: Haim Horenstein)

As a general rule, the rabbi wrote, there is a religious commandment to obey the instructions of the authorities, emphasizing: "It is imperative to follow the instructions of public health officials."

Meanwhile, the Conference of European Rabbis (CER) released new instructions to its flocks in the continent to refrain from kissing mezuzahs, other people and Torah and prayer books.

CER President Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt put out a document with the new precautions to the organization's 700 religious leaders.





Publication: Ynet (online)  
Date: 04.03.2020  
3/3



"We have consulted with infectious diseases and public health experts to formulate new precautions for synagogues under our jurisdiction," said Goldschmidt.

The CER's instructions order rabbis and other religious leaders to keep disinfectants in public places, such as the entrance to synagogues, schools, halls, etc., and make sure soap is accessible at hand-washing stations. If someone is in solitary confinement - don't visit him or her unless you use protective measures.

"We pray for all those who are battling the disease and hope that God will cure them and the scientists will reach a vaccine soon," said Goldschmidt.

<https://www.ynetnews.com/article/BJKwhNaEI>

