



## By Rabbi Reuven Gerson

Avrohom Avinu is described, in this week's parsha, in relation to the *pesach*, the door of his tent. The commentaries note that this is an allusion to the mitzvah of mezuzah.

A doorway is a point of transition. It is the point where the outside world interfaces with the inside world of the home. The mezuzah reminds the person in transition, as the Rambam writes so succinctly, "When one enters or exits he encounters the singularity of Hashem. This will stimulate one's love of Hashem and arouse one from one's slumber and involvement in the mire of this world. Then one will realize that there is no other eternal truth besides for the knowledge of Hashem."

Avrohom and Sorah embodied this concept in their very beings. They stood at the gateway of a new world, a world that recognized the unity of Hashem. They did not hide their belief, they were Jews in their home and outside.

The Pri Tzadik writes that the internal message of the mezuzah, included in the two parshios written inside, is the obligation to accept the yoke of Heaven and the mitzvah to love Hashem. Avrohom personified these two mitzvos and incorporated others in his quest to learn about Hashem and His ways.

This is possibly an approach to understanding the Zohar Hakodesh's words, that the Avos knew Hashem via His Name *Shakei*, from the outside, as it is on the outside of the Mezuzah. The Avos were at this point of transition, bringing the knowledge of Hashem into the world. They taught the world the lesson of the mezuzah, in a similar fashion to Onkelus HaGeir, that Hashem protects the inhabitants of the world, unlike human kings that need the protection of others.

This was and still is the eternal legacy of the Avos. As we continue in their ways, we too should approach the mezuzah, and apply its vital lesson to our lives.

### פילפול טורח Pilpulei Torah

#### Of Pirates and Profits

By: Rabbi Yitzchok Grossman

ON MAY 27, 2008 ARTHUR MAX OF THE AP AMSTERDAM, NETHERLANDS REPORTED.

A Dutch shipping company negotiated with Somali pirates seeking the release of nine crew members on a freighter that was hijacked in the latest attack on merchant shipping off the coast of Somalia

.The responsa literature of a particular culture in the area of Choshen Mishpat generally reflects

the type of economic activity common to that culture. The responsa of the Ottoman Poskim are much concerned with commerce, maritime and overland, indicating that trade was a major component of the economic activity of Jews in the Ottoman Empire. Many of the responsa highlight the rather hazardous nature of the transportation of goods during the period. The land routes were susceptible to banditry, and the shipping routes to shipwreck, piracy and even mutiny.

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**The preceding news story reminds me of this sensational responsum [Maharashdam HM 344]:**

A boat in which R. Yosef and other Jewish merchants were traveling was captured by pirates, who seized the merchants and their merchandise. Through the mercy of God, the Venetian authorities captured in turn several of the pirates, and held them in lieu of the merchants and their merchandise. The pirates, exemplifying the notion of 'honor among thieves', were willing to release the merchants in exchange for their comrades, but they claimed that they were unable to return the property. The authorities relayed the pirates' offer to the merchants for their consideration. The merchants who were in captivity were willing to accept the deal, even though it meant accepting the loss of their property, but one R. Yechiel, whose silk merchandise the pirates had taken but who was apparently not himself a prisoner, refused the deal, preferring rather to hold out for his property.

The other merchants demanded he relinquish his claim. "Will it be good in the eyes of G-d, that we should die for the sake of Reb Yechiel's silk!" they cried.

**While the question itself is fascinating from a social and historical perspective, Maharashdam's answer is fascinating from a Halachic perspective**

He actually begins by agreeing with R. Yechiel, citing that 'one may not save himself with the

property of another' [Bava Kama 117b] This Gemara teaches us that Beis Din cannot compel the owner of property to forfeit it even for the purpose of saving someone else's life.

Accordingly, R. Yechiel may tell them "save yourselves (at your own expense), and pay me for my silk!

However, Maharashdam concludes that since the silk is obstructing the salvation of the prisoners it has the status of a rodef. Consequently, Reb Yechiel is obligated to forfeit his Silk.

Maharashdam arrived at this conclusion by analogizing this case to one of a man who loaded his donkey onto a boat before the passengers had boarded. After they set sail the donkey attempted to capsize the boat. A passenger on board pushed the donkey into the river, where it drowned.

When the case came before Rabbah, he exempted the passenger from paying for the donkey.

Abbaye asked Rabbah: "But has he not saved himself with another man's property?" Rabbah responded: "It [the donkey] was originally a Rodef"

**To be continued.**

(This column in conjunction with The Bais HaVaad L'Inyonei Mishpat. To receive their emails send a request to Rabbi Gerson at [rdg9@juno.com](mailto:rdg9@juno.com))

**Mazel Tov**

**Dr. and Mrs. Jeffrey Gross on the marriage of their son  
Doniel**

**Are your Mezuzos placed on the right- right side of the door?**

**Did your home renovation change the "flow" of your house?**

**join**

**Rabbi Boruch Hirschfeld**

**at the kollel for a two part shiur on where to affix your mezuzos.**

**Sunday November 16<sup>th</sup>**

**Sunday November 23<sup>rd</sup>**

**12:15 followed by mincha at 1:00.**

**a misplaced mezuzah might:**

**not afford the shmira of the mitzvah.**

**need a new brocha when being reaffixed.**



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