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PARSHA INSIGHT

BY RABBI YAAKOV ASHER SINCLAIR

Buried Treasure

*“...And you will be to Me an ‘am segula,’ a treasured nation
from all the nations, for all the world is Mine.” (19:5)*

What is the connection between the first half of this sentence, “And you will be to Me a treasured nation from all the nations,” and the second half: “for all the world is Mine”?

Our Sages teach, “G-d has nothing in His treasury except a storehouse of the Fear of Heaven.” (Berachot 33) The Vilna Gaon comments that a treasury contains only things that are both valuable and are difficult to acquire. Everything in this world is the Hand of Heaven; He already has everything. Everything, that is, save the Fear of Heaven itself, for that depends solely

on individual free choice. Thus, in reality, G-d has nothing in His treasury of true value to Him except the storehouse of the Fear of Heaven.

“*And you will be to Me an am segula...*” Rashi interprets the adjective *segula* as meaning “a treasury”. A treasured nation.

“*For all the world is mine.*” Being that the entire world already belongs to G-d, the only thing that is a treasure to Him is the Jewish People, who have chosen to fear Him.

PLEASE JOIN US...

...in saying Tehillim/Psalms and a special prayer to G-d for the safety and security of all of Klal Yisrael in these times of conflict and conclude with the following special prayer:

אֲחֵינוּ בְּלִבְיַת יִשְׂרָאֵל

“Our brothers, the entire family of Israel, who are delivered into distress and captivity, whether they are on sea or dry land – may G-d have mercy on them and remove them from stress to relief, from darkness to light, from subjugation to redemption now, speedily and soon.”

BY RABBI MOSHE NEWMAN

Avodah Zara 9 - 15

The Guard Outside the Door

Onkelos told the Roman soldiers, “A king of flesh and blood sits inside and his servants guard him from the outside, whereas regarding the Holy One, Blessed is He, His servants are inside and He guards them from the outside.”

The *gemara* relates the context in which this was said. Onkelos the son of Klonimos, born into a Roman royal family, was a convert from the Roman paganism of the times to Torah Judaism. The Caesar sent a unit of his soldiers to bring Onkelos to him (presumably to be killed for rebelling by converting), but Onkelos drew them close to G-d through Torah verses, and they all converted. Subsequently, Caesar sent another group of soldiers to bring him, and warned them not to say anything to him. As they were walking on the way, he said to them that he would like to tell them something ‘secular’: “It is the custom of the world that when a minor official walks with a greater one, the lesser one carries a torch and walks ahead to light the way. This is the manner of all levels of officials, all the way up the ‘power chain’. But does the king light a torch for any person?” Onkelos asked rhetorically. They said, “No”. He told them, “But the Holy One, Blessed is He, takes a torch and goes ahead of the Jewish People, as it is written: And G-d would go before them by day with a pillar of cloud to lead them on the way, and at night with a pillar of fire to give them light, so they could travel (in the desert) day and night (Shemot 13:21). They also all converted.”

But Caesar didn’t give up. The story continues: Caesar then sent yet another group of soldiers to fetch Onkelos, and instructed them not to have any discussion with him at all. After the soldiers took him and they were all leaving his home, Onkelos saw the mezuzah on his doorpost and placed his hand on it, saying to them, “What’s this?” Their interest was quite piqued, and they said to him, “You tell us.” He said to them, “The custom of the world is that a king of flesh and blood sits inside and his servants guard him from the outside, whereas regarding the Holy One, Blessed is He, His servants are inside and He guards them from the outside — as it is said: “G-d will guard your going out and your coming in from now and forever (Psalms 121:8).” These soldiers converted as well, and Caesar — realizing that it was a lost cause to capture Onkelos, and ruining the fact that he had already lost three divisions of soldiers who converted to Judaism — stopped sending any more troops.

Onkelos was a very great Torah scholar who translated the Torah into Aramaic. A translation is a complicated matter, as anyone who has translated an important text can attest. Since every translation is in essence an “interpretation”, more than mere knowledge of the two languages is necessary. The translator must be absolutely true to the meaning of the source text, and therefore Onkelos’ tremendous feat was his ability to translate the Chumash in accordance with the teachings of our Sages that had been handed down from generation to generation, all the way back to Moshe Rabbeinu. His translation, one that we still have today, is known as “Targum Onkelos”, and is widely studied by Jews everywhere as part of the mitzvah of “*Shnayim Mikra v’echad Targum*” — the mitzvah for each individual to study the Torah portion of the week twice each week in the Chumash, along with the “Targum” translation of “Targum Onkelos.”

It is important to point out that the halachic authorities write that the practice of kissing the mezuzah has a basis in this historical event recorded in our *sugya*, in which Onkelos touched the mezuzah as he left his house in custody of the Roman soldiers. Besides our showing love for the mitzvah of mezuzah by touching and kissing a mezuzah when passing by one, we also recall the message of Divine Providence taught to us by Onkelos: G-d protects us and our homes. (See the Rema in Shulchan Aruch Yoreh De’ah 285:2, and the commentaries there, for a discussion of various customs regarding touching the mezuzah, and what is said when doing so.)

The *Aruch Hashulchan*, by Rabbi Yechiel Michal Epstein (Eastern Europe, 1829-1908), states that some great halachic authorities write that when one leaves his home he should place his hand on the mezuzah and say the following prayer: “May G-d guard me in my going out and in my coming back.” And he should do this and say this likewise when he returns home. (285:3) Rabbi Epstein writes that this practice is to some extent based on what we learn on our *daf* regarding what Onkelos did and said when he was passing by his mezuzah.

• *Avoda Zara 11a*

PARSHA Q&A?

1. Yitro had 7 names. Why was one of his names *Yeter*?
 2. News of which two events motivated Yitro to come join the Jewish People?
 3. What name of Yitro indicates his love for Torah?
 4. Why was Tzipora with her father, Yitro, and not with Moshe when *Bnei Yisrael* left Egypt?
 5. Why does verse 18:5 say that Yitro came to the desert — don't we already know that the *Bnei Yisrael* were in the desert?
 6. Why did Moshe tell Yitro all that G-d had done for the Jewish People?
 7. According to the *Midrash* quoted by Rashi, how did Yitro respond when he was told about the destruction of Egypt?
 8. Who is considered as if he enjoys the splendor of the *Shechina*?
 9. On what day did Moshe sit to judge the Jewish People?
 10. Who is considered a co-partner in Creation?
 11. "Moshe sat to judge the people, and the people stood before Moshe...." What bothered Yitro about this arrangement?
 12. Why did Yitro return to his own land?
 13. How did the encampment at Sinai differ from the other encampments?
 14. To whom does the Torah refer when it uses the term "*Beit Yaakov*"?
 15. How is G-d's protection of the Jewish People similar to an eagle's protection of its young?
 16. What was G-d's original plan for *Matan Torah*? What was the response of the Jewish People?
 17. How many times greater is the "measure of reward" than the "measure of punishment"?
 18. How is it derived that "Don't steal" refers to kidnapping?
 19. In response to hearing the Torah given at Sinai, how far backwards did the Jewish people retreat in fear?
 20. Why does the use of iron tools profane the altar?
-

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to this week's questions! - All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary unless otherwise stated.

1. 18:1 - Because he caused a parsha to be added to the Torah. *Yeter* means addition.
 2. 18:1 - The splitting of the sea and the war against Amalek.
 3. 18:1 - Chovav.
 4. 18:3 - When Aharon met Moshe with his family on their way down to Egypt, Aharon said to Moshe: "We're pained over the Jews already in Egypt, and you're bringing more Jews to Egypt?" Moshe, hearing this, sent his wife and children back to Midian.
 5. 18:5 - To show Yitro's greatness. He was living in a luxurious place; yet he went to the desert in order to study the Torah.
 6. 18:8 - To draw Yitro closer to the Torah way of life.
 7. 18:9 - He grieved.
 8. 18:12 - One who dines with Torah scholars.
 9. 18:13 - The day after Yom Kippur.
 10. 18:13 - A judge who renders a correct decision.
 11. 18:14 - Yitro felt that the people weren't being treated with the proper respect.
 12. 18:27 - To convert the members of his family to Judaism.
 13. 19:2 - The Jewish People were united.
 14. 19:3 - The Jewish women.
 15. 19:4 - An eagle carries its young on top of its wings to protect them from human arrows. So too, G-d's cloud of glory separated between the Egyptians and the Jewish camp in order to absorb Egyptian missiles and arrows fired at the Jewish People.
 16. 19:9 - G-d offered to appear to Moshe and to give the Torah through him. The Jewish People responded that they wished to hear the Torah directly from G-d.
 17. 20:6 - 500 times.
 18. 20:13 - Since it is written immediately after "Don't murder" and "Don't commit adultery," it is derived that "Don't steal" refers to a crime carrying the same penalty as the first two, namely, the death penalty.
 19. 20:15 - They backed away from the mountain twelve *mil* (one *mil* is 2000 cubits).
 20. 20:22 - The altar was created to extend life; iron is sometimes used to make weapons which shorten life.
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LOVE of the LAND

Selections from classical Torah sources which express the special relationship between the People of Israel and Eretz Yisrael

Modi'in and the Tomb of the Maccabees

Although there is no firm evidence that the Maccabees, the heroes of the Chanukah miracle, are buried in Modi'in, the site east of Lod and Ben Shemen near the relatively new city of Modi'in is visited by many Jews, who consider it to be the resting place of the Maccabees.



Eshtori HaParchi identified Tzova, west of Jerusalem, as the Maccabean Modi'in, while other travelers named different sites. During the last century, researchers have leaned towards the above-mentioned site near the Arab village of Mideah, where visitors go to identify with the Chanukah heroes.

PARSHA OVERVIEW

Hearing of the miracles G-d performed for *Bnei Yisrael*, Moshe's father-in-law Yitro arrives with Moshe's wife and sons, reuniting the family in the wilderness. Yitro is so impressed by Moshe's detailing of the Exodus from Egypt that he converts to Judaism. Seeing that the only judicial authority for the entire Jewish nation is Moshe himself, Yitro suggests that subsidiary judges be appointed to adjudicate smaller matters, leaving Moshe free to attend to larger issues. Moshe accepts his advice. *Bnei Yisrael* arrive at Mount Sinai where G-d offers them the Torah. After they accept, G-d charges Moshe to instruct the people not to approach the mountain and to prepare for three days. On the third day, amidst

thunder and lightning, G-d's voice emanates from the smoke-enshrouded mountain and He speaks to the Jewish People, giving them the Ten Commandments: 1. Believe in G-d, 2. Don't worship other "gods", 3. Don't use G-d's name in vain, 4. Observe Shabbat, 5. Honor your parents, 6. Don't murder, 7. Don't commit adultery, 8. Don't kidnap, 9. Don't testify falsely, 10. Don't covet.

After receiving the first two commandments, the Jewish People, overwhelmed by this experience of the Divine, request that Moshe relay G-d's word to them. G-d instructs Moshe to caution the Jewish People regarding their responsibility to be faithful to the One who spoke to them.

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BY RABBI YIRMIYAHU ULLMAN

Birthdays – Part 1: *Jewish Sources*

From: Robert

*Dear Rabbi,
Does Judaism place any importance on birthdays, and are any birthdays considered to be more important than others?*

Dear Robert,

This is a commonly asked question which applies to everybody and is thus worth exploring in more than one installment. Thus, in this first installment, I'll discuss the Torah sources about birthdays, and if according to Judaism they should be commemorated and/or celebrated. In the next installment I'll explore whether certain birthdays are more important than others, and what may be uniquely Jewish ways to observe birthdays.

While births are certainly recorded in the Torah and considered significant, the only mention of actually commemorating a birthday is regarding Pharaoh, the wicked ruler of Egypt: "Now it came about on... Pharaoh's birthday that Pharaoh made a feast for all his servants." (Gen. 40:20) Since Pharaoh's behavior is hardly exemplary, this alone would suggest that it's not a Jewish thing to commemorate birthdays (Sefer Otzar Kol Minhagei Yeshurun).

Furthermore, the Talmud (Eruvin 13b) teaches that it would have been better for a person not to have been born. Based on this, Sefer Divrei Torah (5:88) writes that the anniversary of one's birth is no cause for celebration, since he'd be better off not having been born in the first place.

However, Tosafot notes that this teaching in Eruvin seems to contradict a teaching in Avoda Zara (5a) requiring gratitude to our forefathers for being born. Tosafot reconciles the two sources by explaining that the former refers to a "regular person" who, lacking merit, would have been better off not being born; whereas the latter refers to a "*tzaddik*" who, because of his righteousness, is certainly better off having been born.

This is consistent with the teaching of our Sages (Rosh Hashana 11a) concerning the verse of Moses' death: "And Moses spoke to Israel saying, 'I am one hundred and twenty years old *today*.'" (Deut. 31:1-2) Based on the Sages, Rashi paraphrases Moses' inten-

tion to mean: Today my days and years were fulfilled; on this day I was born, and on this day I shall die. This teaches us that G-d fulfills the years of the righteous to the day and to the month, as it is written: "I shall fulfill the number of your days." (Ex. 23:26) From here we see the significance of the birthday of a person who utilizes his life for good.

In fact, insofar as Rosh Hashana commemorates not the first day of Creation, but rather the day on which Mankind was "born", and which initiated the purpose of Creation, one's birthday is a type of personal Rosh Hashana. What's more, on the verse, "And Abraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned" (Gen. 21:8), one opinion in the Midrash (B.R. 53:4) identifies this feast as celebrating Isaac's thirteenth birthday, the day when he was "weaned" from childhood and assumed the responsibilities of a Jewish adult. According to another opinion this feast occurred on his second birthday. (Lekach Tov) Since Isaac was born on Pesach, either way it was a festive birthday celebration.

Interestingly, the Talmudic Sages (Yerushalmi, Berachot 2:4) made yet another correlation between an important birthday and a different "holiday" in the Jewish calendar by stating that Mashiach will be born on Tisha b'Av, which is called a "*moed*," a special, appointed time.

Furthermore, the Sages note a special *mazal* influence which is operative on a person's birthday. The Yerushalmi (Rosh Hashana 3:8) records that when Amalek battled the Jewish People, they assigned those soldiers whose birthday it was to fight on the front lines. The commentator Korban Edah explains that this is because on the birthday one has a special *mazal* for success. The Chida (Chomat Onach, Iyov chapter 3) points out that this is rooted in Kabbalistic sources, and that on one's birthday his *mazal* is particularly strong.

These sources all indicate the importance of one's birthday and its special *mazal* influence, suggesting a reason to commemorate it. In the next installment we'll examine in more detail how this increased *mazal* is manifested, and cite various customary practices which define a particularly Jewish way of observing one's birthday.

• Sources: *A Jewish Perspective on Birthdays*,
Rabbi Aryeh Lebowitz

WHAT'S IN A WORD?

Synonyms in the Hebrew Language

BY RABBI REUVEN CHAIM KLEIN

G-d's Best Friend

The Midrash tells us that Moshe's father-in-law Yitro (Jethro) had seven different names by which he is called in the Bible: Yitro, Yeter, Reuel, Chovav, Keini, Putiel, and Chever. The Midrash explains how each of these appellations applies to Yitro, but for the purposes of our discussion we will focus only on two names. Yitro is called Reuel because he became a friend (*reyah*) of G-d, and he is called Chever because he became a friend (*chaver*) of G-d. These two names of Yitro conjure two different Hebrew words which mean "friend". In this essay we will explore the implications of these two words and how they are not totally synonymous. We will also discuss a third word for "friend" — *amit*.

Rabbi Elazar Rokeach of Worms, a late 12th century Asheknazic scholar, in his commentary to the Siddur, explains the differences between these three words for "friend". He argues that *chaver* is a friend who has left his original place and has attached (*chibur*) himself to another place (like a member of a society is called a *chaver* of that body). Alternatively, he explains that *chaver* refers to two people who were separated and now came close to each other, like old friends reunited. The word *amit* is somebody who comes sometimes, but not so frequently. Therefore, it implies a lesser degree of intimacy than the word *chaver* does. The word *reyah*, on the other hand, is somebody whom one is with frequently and to whom one reveals his secrets.

Rabbi Shlomo Aharon Wertheimer (1866-1935) offers a slight variant on this explanation, but the gist of it matches what Rokeach writes. He writes that the word *chaver*, which is related to the word for connection, implies affinity or connection in one shared aspect (e.g., "We are friends because we both go to the same school."). By contrast, the word *amit*, which is not related to connection, denotes a person with whom one enjoys a business relationship. The word *reyah* tends to denote complete affection, and is the ultimate form of companionship. In short, Rabbi Wertheimer also understands that *amit* denotes a less intimate associate, *reyah* the most intimate compan-

ion, and *chaver* somewhere in the middle. (When G-d commanded the Jews to ask of their Egyptian "friends" to borrow gold and silver vessels in Exodus 11:2, the Torah uses the word *reyah*, which implies a very close form of friendship. I'm not sure what to make of this.)

Should we try to translate these terms into the English vernacular, *chaver* would mean "friend", *amit*, "acquaintance", and *reyah*, "confidante". Indeed, the Bible itself implies that *reyah* refers to the closest form of inter-personal relationships. When discussing different people whose negative influence might cause a person to commit idolatry, the Torah (Deut. 13:7) mentions "your friend who is like yourself" (*rayacha kinafshecha*). Similarly, the Torah commands *ve'avta l'rayacha kamocho*, "love your fellow like yourself" (Lev. 19:18). In some places in Rabbinic literature the commandment to love one's *rayah* like oneself is specifically applied to one's wife (e.g., see *Kiddushin* 41a and *Niddah* 17a), and indeed in common usage one refers to his wife as *rayati* (although the term *chaver* is also applied to one's wife, see *Shabbat* 63a). Depending on the exact context, Targum Onkelos sometimes translates *ray'ayhu* ("his friend", the third-person possessive form of *reyah*) into Aramaic as *chavrei* (his "*chaver*") and sometimes as *rachamohi* ("one who loves him").

As we have already noted, the root of the word *chaver* denotes attachment. But what does the root of the word *reyah* mean? The root REISH-AYIN — *ra* — usually means "bad" or "evil". What does that have to do with friendship? The Bible itself already makes a pun on this similarity, *roeh kesilim yeiroah* (Proverbs 13:20), which means "he who befriends fools will become evil". Rashi explains that *yeiroah* does not mean "will become evil," but actually means "will become broken" (see also Maharsha to *Berachot* 63a regarding Proverbs 18:24). Indeed, the Talmudic expression *kotel rauah* means a broken wall, and *teruah* refers to a series of broken-up sounds which emanate from a Shofar (as opposed to *tekiyah* which denotes one unbroken note).

Continued on page nine

PRAYER Essentials

BY RABBI YITZCHAK BOTTON

Personal Prayer

Until the Common Era prayer did not have a set time or text. People prayed in their own words whenever they chose, each according to his ability. Those more fluent beseeched and praised G-d more, while those who found it difficult to arrange their words prayed less. Some prayed once a day, while others prayed several times.

As a result of exile and persecution, language became confused and Hebrew was becoming forgotten among the average people. Therefore, the leaders at that time organized a set text for all to pray. (*Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Tefillah* 1:3-4)

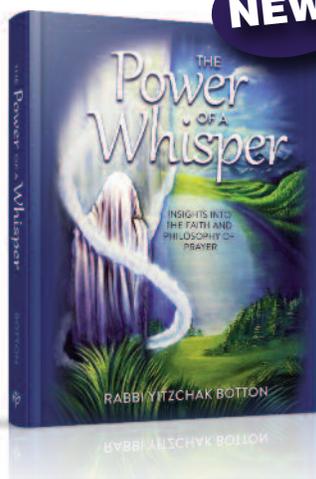
The Shelah HaKadosh explains that although the Men of the Great Assembly composed a fixed text of prayers for all Jews, in addition each person should pray to G-d spontaneously for his needs. “For every endeavor, one should pray to G-d, expressing himself in any way he is able. After praying, one can engage in his endeavors and trust that G-d will help.”

Rabbi Natan writes, “One should make sure to pray to G-d in his own language. This is how prayer began. The main form of prayer is an expression of the heart before G-d in a person’s own words, as Rambam

writes in the beginning of his Laws of Prayer. He states that this was originally the main form of prayer, before worship was formalized by the Men of the Great Assembly.

“But even according to the Law, the original form of prayer is still of utmost importance. Although we follow the order of prayer ordained, one’s personal prayer, as it originally existed, is still the most beneficial. Make a habit of praying to G-d from the depths of your heart, using your own words, in whatever language you know best. Ask G-d to make you truly worthy of serving Him. This is the essence of prayer.”

One should accustom oneself to pray regularly in his own words. Even someone who understands the set prayers in *lashon hakodesh* should do so, because his own words will be more natural, coming from his heart. All the more so, someone who doesn’t understand Hebrew must make time to pray in his own language, which is the only way for his words to be expressions of his heart. Even a short prayer said with feeling, the way one person speaks to another, will surely be most dear to G-d.



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BY RABBI YOSEF HERSHMAN

Judaism: Not Religion or Theology

The circumstances of the giving of the Torah convey a great deal about the character of Torah, and of our relationship to it. In G-d's preparatory words to Moshe He explains that by virtue of the Torah the people will become a "kingdom of priests to Me, and a holy nation." There is then a three day period of separation and sanctification to prepare for the great day. Moshe is instructed to set a boundary around the people and to warn them not to draw close to the mountain or touch any part of it.

One purpose of this separation was to establish for future generations that G-d remained in His place, opposite the people, and that His Word came *to* the people. In this way Judaism is fundamentally different than all other "religions".

"Religion" stems from the hearts of people, their codes of law originate in the human mind and merely express their conceptions of deity, of human destiny, and of man's relationship to deity and his fellow man that exist in a particular period of history. Like all other disciplines — language, science, art and philosophy — "religion" is subject to change with the passage of time, as its laws and practices are merely an expression of levels reached by civilization at a given time. Because it is only a marker, religion cannot undertake to raise and educate the nation from which it sprang, up to its own higher standard.

But Torah is not religion. It was given by G-d *to* the people, who stood at a distance, and required preparation to receive it. It was given from the untouchable, extraterrestrial sphere, and strict separation was maintained. As such, Torah presents the absolute ideals, and sets forth conceptions for all time about G-d and

human affairs.

Far from having its genesis from within the people, this set of Laws was imposed on a *stubborn, stiff-necked* people, a people who struggled for centuries to impart and implement its truths. It is this imperfection of the Jewish People, and its repeated rebellions against Torah that attests to the Divine origin and uniqueness of Torah. It still remains an absolute, an ideal, towards which the people strive, and the Torah still awaits the age which will be fully ripe for its realization. The Torah has no development and no history; it is the Jewish People which has a history, and a development towards Torah. Torah does not have to catch up with the times. It is the times that have to catch up with the Torah.

As much as Torah is not religion, it is also not theology. Despite the Divine, unchanging and supernatural *nature* of Torah, it has never been withheld from the layman and reserved for the gowned theologian. "Theology" contains the thoughts of man on G-d and things Divine, and results in complicated systems of theology, incomprehensible to the layman. But Torah contains the thoughts of G-d on man and human affairs. The Torah speaks not of the essence of G-d and the supernatural, but of what G-d is *to us*, and how we are to relate to Him and to each other. The Torah does not describe how things look in Heaven, but how they ought to look in our hearts and homes. And this is why the entire nation is to be a holy nation of priests, each member drawing the Torah's wisdom into his personal sphere, wherever and whenever that sphere may be.

• Sources: *Commentary, Shemot 19:10-13; Collected Writings I, pp. 183-186, 189-190*

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BY RABBI ZE'EV KRAINES

Mezuzah on the Front Door

Q: I am very happy that my son has become more religious, but I am worried that he is becoming “ultra-Orthodox”. I come from a traditional home; in fact, my mother kept kosher, and we had a mezuzah. I too have always proudly placed a mezuzah on my front door, but now my little “rabbi” wants us to buy mezuzahs for every single door! Is this necessary?

A: Your son is fortunate that he has such supportive parents. You will surely have a lot of *nachat* from him as he blossoms into an inspired Jew and eventually establishes his own home.

While it is true that sometimes “newbees” to Jewish observance need some guidance to make sure they don’t go off the deep end, in this case there is nothing “ultra” about your son’s request. There is no question that every door to in a Jewish home deserves a mezuzah as long as it meets the criteria we discuss weekly in this column. In the words of *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch*:

It is a positive commandment to affix a mezuzah to every doorway. Even if one has several rooms, and

each room has several doors that are intended for entry and exit, nevertheless a mezuzah is required for all the doors.

Unfortunately, you are correct to note that years back it was common for people to have only one mezuzah on their front door. We must remember that the opportunities for Jewish education in our parents’ generation were limited, and sometimes the traditions that they followed were uninformed. Thankfully, this anomaly has been rectified in our times, and it is now accepted practice to fulfill the mitzvah properly, even at great expense. You can be proud that the Jewish education you have provided your son with has inspired him to want to follow authentic halachic rulings.

- *Sources: Shulchan Aruch Yoreh De’ah 286:16-17; Rema Yoreh De’ah 287:2; Shach 286:9; Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 11:1*

Got a mezuzah question or story?

Email rabbi@ohrsandton.com or submit on my website mymezuzahstory.com

What’s In a Word...continued from page six

In essence, the root of the word *reyah* means “broken”, but the word *reyah* also refers to a close friendship, which is a form of connection (just like the word *chaver*). These two aspects are diametric opposites! It seems that this is yet another example of a phenomenon in the Hebrew language whereby a word can paradoxically carry one meaning and carry the exact opposite meaning, as well. Alternatively, we may suggest that the word *reyah* implies the idea that your friend’s existence as a separate body is only because he is “broken” apart from you, but is really meant to

be attached to you.

Whenever you are contemplating the idea of friendship, you must remember the immortal words of the American poet Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882), “The only way to have a friend is to be one.” Y’all come back now, or as President Bill Clinton famously said, “*Shalom Chaver*.”

Eiluy Nishmat my mother Bracha bat R’ Dovid and my grandmother Shprintza bat R’ Meir

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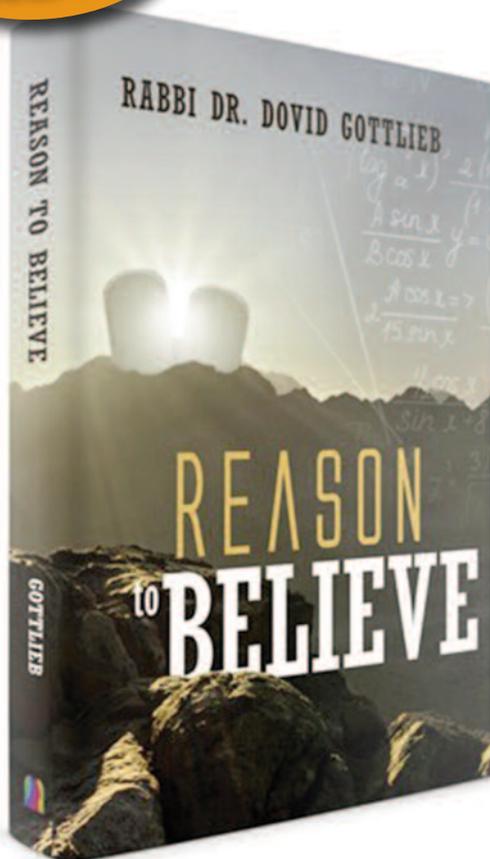
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