



**The Guardian of Israel's Doors
Parshas Bo**

They were surprised. They had just arrived on a long and exhausting flight from the US to China. They wished to go home, but the security personnel at the entrance to the campus they lived on barred their way.

My grandson, Rabbi Dov Hennig, is a Chabad emissary in China, where he works tirelessly to bring Judaism to all who seek it. His home has become a home away from home for many who seek spirituality and a warm surrounding.

When he asked why his family was being kept away he was told that several homes were broken into while they were away. He had to wait for a police escort.

When the police came they worked the scene to find clues. The investigators said the burglars were very professional. "Maybe we find their tracks in your home," the police said.

My grandson smiled and said: "I would be glad to hear what they found, because I have been looking for a long time and have found nothing."

When they entered the home they were astonished to discover that their home had been left untouched. The silverware was all in place and no one had entered the place for some time.

"It's a miracle," the police said. "They broke into every home and left a real mess, they skipped only your home. Something here is off."

My grandson became nervous. Maybe they think he was part of the scheme. The police left without saying anything.

Two weeks later, Rabbi Dov received a phone call at five in the morning. The police asked him to report at the nearest police station as soon as possible. He became upset.

He decided to trust in G-d and headed towards the station.

In our weekly parsha we read of the first observance of Passover in history, during which G-d commanded the Israelites to paint their door sills with the blood from the holiday sacrifice.

"The Lord will pass to smite the Egyptians, and He will see the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, and the Lord will pass over the entrance, and He will not permit the destroyer to enter your houses to smite [you]."¹

Why did G-d need a marker on the door? Did he not know where the Israelites dwelled?

Furthermore, G-d has spared the Israelites in the previous plagues. What had changed?

Our Sages recount in the Talmud the story of Onkelos the son of Kalonymus, who became a convert to Judaism, and the Roman emperor, sent a contingent of Roman soldiers after him.

"They took hold of him; and as they were walking on he saw the *Mezuzah* which was fixed on the door-frame and he placed his hand on it saying to them: 'Now what is this?' and they replied: 'You tell us then.' Said he, 'According to universal custom, the mortal king dwells within, and his servants keep guard on him without; but [in the case of] the Holy One, blessed be He, it is His servants who dwell within whilst He keeps guard on them from without; as it is said: The Lord shall guard thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth and for evermore.'"²

The Ramabm teaches us that the purpose of the mezuzah is to remind a Jew to refrain from sinning.

"Whoever wears tefillin on his head and arm, wears tzitzis on his garment, and has a mezuzah on his entrance, can be assured that he will not sin, because he has many who will remind him. These are the angels, who will prevent him from sinning, as states: "The angel of God camps around those who fear Him and protects them."³

The Radbaz explains that the mezuzah's secret is to ward off any harm that may come to an individual.

This is what G-d wanted to tell the Israelites as they exited Egypt – clean yourself of sin, remember who created the world, and in this merit you shall be redeemed.

When he arrived at the police station, the officers showed him photos of his mezuzah.

"What is this?" they inquired. "What kind of technology are you using?"

"What technology are you talking about?" My grandson replied. "Is this from Israel or the US?" They persisted.

Then Rabbi Dov understood everyone's mistake.

It turns out that the thieves were caught. They were asked why they skipped Rabbi Dov's home. They replied that they feared the camera on the door, technology they had not encountered before. They thought the mezuzah was a new kind of technology and found no way to disable it, and therefore skipped that house.

Just before leaving, the burglars took photos of the mezuzah so that they could research the "advanced technology."

My grandson became relaxed and told the investigators that the mezuzahs were spiritual security devices that surround the house and protect the Jew everywhere he goes.

¹ Shmot 12:23.

² Tractate Avodah Zarah 11a.

³ Hilchot Mezuzah 6:13.