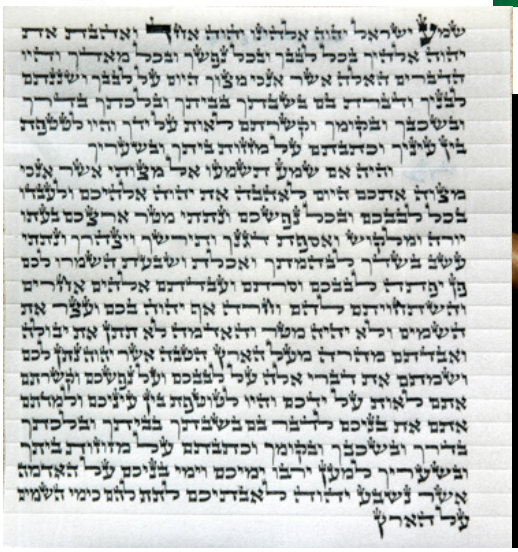
Deuteronomy 6:6-9 (New International Version, ©2010)

[6] These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. [7] Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. [8] Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. [9] Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.



Which brings us back to the real question: why aren't *mezuzot* hung straight?

One of the most famous French rabbis of the twelfth century was Rabbi Solomon ben Isaac, also known as Rashi. His grandson, Rabbenu Tam, felt that *mezuzot* should be affixed horizontally for the sake of tradition, because the scrolls in their leather cases were originally pushed horizontally into the crevices between the stones around the doorways of homes.

Rashi argued that *mezuzot* should be affixed vertically, in such a way that the top pointed toward the Almighty. They eventually compromised, and agreed that a *mezuzah* should be hung on the diagonal, with its top inclined toward the inside. The decision, allowing peace to rein in a Jewish home in twelfth century France, is part of the message of the *mezuzah*.

The blessing said while hanging a *mezuzah*:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ לִקְבּוֹעַ מְזוּזָה

Transliteration: Barukh atah Adonai, Elohaynu, melekh ha-olam, asher keedishanu b'meetzvotav v'tzeevanu leek'boa mezuzah.
Translation: Blessed are you, Lord, our God, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with God's commandments and commanded us to affix a *mezuzah*.