



# SIMCHAT SHMUEL

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Our *sedra* this week, *Parshat Ki Teitzei* includes the instruction to build a fence or railing around the rooftops of our home: *ki tivneh bayit chadash, v'asita maakeh legagecha*.

The *mitzvah* to affix a railing on the roofs of our homes seems like a very straightforward safety instruction. However, if this *mitzvah* is indeed solely about safety, why does the verse specify- *ki tivneh bayit chadash*- when you build a **new home**-Shouldn't this *mitzvah* apply under all circumstances?

Furthermore, why specifically on the roof, what about other areas of potential danger, for example a steep ravine on our property, or a swimming pool, etc? Might there be more to this instruction than simple safety considerations?

The Chasidic Masters point out that *Parshat Ki Teitzei* is always read in *Chodesh Elul*. During these days of *Elul*, we are preparing ourselves for *Rosh HaShana*. Rabbi Yaakov Yosef of Polnoye, the *Toldot Yaakov Yosef zy'a*, explains that if we wish to rebuild

ourselves, to prepare for the new year emotionally, it begins with safeguarding our proverbial personal rooftops-clearing our minds of any inappropriate thoughts, and getting to the proper head space for that new beginning. We must build a symbolic fence around our minds which only lets in that which is appropriate, and protect against outside influence.

The *Netivot Shalom*, the Slonimer Rebbe *zy'a*, suggests that this interpretation offered by the *Toldot Yaakov Yosef*, is indeed the level of protection we need to seek as we begin to build for the new year.

Rabbi Moshe Wolfson, *shlita*, further elaborates and suggests that all the spiritual work and growth we seek to accomplish during these days of *Elul* and subsequent days of the *Chagei Tishrei*, need to be the impetus for sustained spiritual growth for the entire year. Each year as one year draws to a close and we transition into the proverbial *bayit chadash*- new home of the coming year, we need to hold tight, to build a railing or protective fence around the growth we have hopefully achieved during these days of *Elul* and *Tishrei*, so that we may sustain this growth throughout the coming year.

*Yehi Ratzon*, may each of us be blessed to both ascend and grow spiritually in the days ahead, and to hold strong to that growth in the year ahead. *Shabbat Shalom*. ■

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