



SIMCHAT SHMUEL

BY RABBI SAM SHOR
DIRECTOR, TORAH INITIATIVES,
OU ISRAEL

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 proverbial fence around our minds, to only let 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, zy'a 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.

The **Oheiv Yisrael, the Apter Rebbe zy'a** extends this idea even further. Each person is responsible to safeguard themselves spiritually, but also should feel a sense of obligation to ensure that others will be protected from potential spiritual challenges and pitfalls. By creating boundaries and safeguards we can assist our fellow Jew from stumbling.

Yehi Ratzon, may each of us be blessed to both ascend and grow spiritually in the days ahead, to assist one another in sustaining that spiritual growth, and to hold strong to that growth in the year ahead. ■



Tzitzit tying with Ruti

Beit Knesset HaNassi, 24 Ussishkin

Mondays 1:15-4pm

Wednesdays 12-3pm

no experience needed