

Who is the man who has built a new house and has not inaugurated it? Let him go and return to his house. (20:5)

The *Kohen* proclaimed that certain individuals who were not suited to fight should leave the field, lest their fear shake them up so that it would affect the entire army. Three men are singled out by the *Torah*: he who has a newly built house that has not been inaugurated; he who has planted a vineyard and has not redeemed its fruit of the fourth year; and he who has betrothed a woman and not yet married her. The *Torah* posits that these individuals fear that they will not complete the job they had begun.

A number of lessons can be derived from this *parsha* in the *Torah*. First, we see how sensitive the *Torah* is regarding a person's feelings. **Horav Boruch Sorotzkin, z"l**, places great emphasis upon this, especially in light of the source of the person's anxiety. For example, consider a person leaving for battle. He does not know whether or not he will return. If he is killed, his wife will be a widow and his children will be left fatherless. Can you imagine the tremendous pressure this places upon a person? Yet, what does the *Torah* emphasize? Not his fear of death, not his anxiety regarding his wife and children, but rather his tension concerning the fact that someone else will take over his home or vineyard. This seems petty. Instead of worrying about important things, such as his wife and children's future, he selfishly troubles himself with unimportant details. He is more concerned about someone else taking over his house than he is about dying!

The *Torah* knows, understands, and is sensitive to human nature. If foolish thoughts bother people then the *Torah* exhibits concern. If people place greater significance upon petty jealousies than on real matters, then the *Torah* addresses those issues.

According to **Rashi**, the individual's pain and worry that someone else might have what is rightfully his brings about his exemption from the army. The **Rashbam** suggests a different rationale for excluding these three types of individuals. He says that these individuals feel that since they have had no luck in completing what they began - then obviously they are unlucky people. This depression exempts them from serving. How can a soldier fight, if he is resigned to dying in battle? He will be an impediment to the entire army. A soldier must fight confidently and enthusiastically, not passively, waiting for the bullet to end his misery.

What greater impediment is there than depression? How can one hope to achieve success if his attitude is negative from the start? The *Torah* recognizes that to succeed in battle--and in every area of endeavor for that matter--one should have a positive, enthusiastic attitude. Moreover, as we infer from the *Torah*, a feeling of dejection can be like an infectious disease that spreads through a group like a vicious epidemic. The Jew who is depressed, who feels everyone is against him, who does not see the *mazel*, luck, that he really does have should not be among the community members. He will take everyone down with him.

Yet, the *Torah* addresses this person and his needs. We are obligated to show a little concern and sensitivity for our brother or sister, who--for various reasons--feel they need our support in order to persevere.