



Volume 3. Issue 32.

Scared of War

This week's *mishnayot* described the speech presented to the soldiers as they readied for war. It taught that some soldiers, due to various personal circumstances, were sent home prior to the battle and instead provided support for the soldiers on the battle field. There was another person that was also asked to leave; the *pasuk* describes him as "a person who is scared (*yareh*) and of soft heart (*rach levav*)". The *Mishnah* (8:5) records a *tanaic* debate regarding to whom this description refers.

R' Akiva explains that the description is meant to be interpreted in the literal sense. In other words anyone who "could not stand in the heat of the battle or see the flash of the swords" was sent home. The *Ibn Ezra* elaborates on this opinion explaining that the terms *yareh* and *rach levav* refer to two different people each with distinct fears. The *rach levav* is simply understood as one who is scared of getting hurt. Yet there is another fear that appears to be an equally threatening force of the battle. That is of the *yareh*, who the *Ibn Ezra* explains, is the one that is unable to stomach inflicting pain on another. The *Tosefta* (*Sotah* 7) writes that even the greatest of heroes, if he is merciful, was sent home.

The *Ramban* provides a different distinction between the *yareh* and the *rach levav*. He interprets the *rach levav* in the same way as we have explained – one that is unable to see the brutality of the battle field. However he explains that the *yareh* does not fear the reality of war, but rather lacks *bitachon* in *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*. This 'fear' is far more detrimental in a battle

where "Hashem... walks with you and fights for you".

The second opinion in the *Mishnah*, provided by *R' Yosi Ha'Glili*, is that "*ha'yareh ve'rach levav*" refers to a person that is fearful "of a sin that he has in his hand". The *Maharsha* explains that these battles operated in a miraculous manner in which Hashem fought the war for them. In the times of *Yehoshua*, for example, when "only" thirty-six people were killed in the battle at *Ai*, it was considered a tragic defeat. Consequently the soldiers would need to be of exceptional status in order to merit such miracles. The presence of sin therefore was a very real fear.

The *Gemara* explains that *R' Yosi Ha'Glili* also agrees with *R' Akiva* that a person that is literally scared returns from battle – this is learnt from a separate *pasuk*. "*Ha'yareh ve'rach levav*" simply refers to someone else. This can lead one to ask why 'fear', specifically, is used in context with sin. Furthermore, one would think that the less than righteous would have a reduced sensitivity or fear of their sins.

The *Or Ha'Chaim* therefore explains that one that has a sin would be struck with an unexplainable fear whether or not he was aware of his sins. The soldiers required miracles to protect them during the battles. This fear (as generated by the person's *mazal* - see *Megillah* 3a) would be an indication that he has a sin making him unworthy of miracles and placing him in clear and present danger.

David Bankier

Revision Questions

סוטה ח' א' – ט' ז'

- Was the *mashuach milchama* allowed to address the soldiers in a language other than *lashon ha'kodesh*? (ח' א': ז')
- In who did the *Plishtim* put their faith when they fought *Am Yisrael*? (ח' א': ח')
- In who did *Bnei Amon* put their faith when they fought *Am Yisrael*? (ח' א': ח')
- If someone purchased a new house, were they told to return home from the battle field? (ח' ב': ב')
- If someone received a vineyard as a gift, were they told to return home from the battlefield? (ח' ב': ב')
- Was a *yabam* told to return home from the battlefield? (ח' ב': ב')
- What would the people that were sent home from the battlefield do? (ח' ב': ב')
- Was a *machzir gerushato* sent home from the battlefield? (ח' ג': ג')
- Which people would be exempt from all army service, on and off the field? (ח' ד': ד')
- What are the three opinions regarding to whom the following verse refers: (ח' ה': ח')

"הירא ורץ לבב"

- Could people leave the battlefield once the battle begun? (ח' י': י')
- What are the two opinions regarding in which battles everyone partook? (ח' ז': ז')
- Explain the debate regarding how many people were sent from the *Beit Din* in *Yerushalaim* for the *eglah arufah* performance. (ט' א': ט')
- In what state must the body be found in order that the *eglah arufah* be performed? (ט' ב': ב')
- Would the *eglah arufah* be performed if the closest city did not have a *Beit Din*? (ט' ב': ב')
- If the head was severed from the body, where was the body buried? (ג' ט': ט')
- Explain the debate regarding from which part of the body the distance to the closest city was measured. (ט' ד': ט')
- Who would perform the *eglah arufah*? (ח' ט': ט')
- Where was the *eglah arufah* performed? (ט' ח': ח')
- What work could be performed on the site of the *eglah arufah*? (ט' ח': ח')
- Why would the *Beit Din* say: (ט' י': י') "ידינו לא שפכה את הדם הזה ועינינו לא ראו"
- What would happen to the *egel* if the murderer was found prior to the *arifah*? (ט' ז': ז')
- Could the murderer be tried if he was found after the performance of the *eglah arufah*? (ט' ז': ז')

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Next Week's Mishnayot...

שבת קודש	Friday	Thursday	Wednesday	Tuesday	Monday	Sunday
ה' ניסן	23 rd March ד' ניסן	22 nd March ג' ניסן	21 st March ב' ניסן	20 th March א' ניסן ראש חודש	19 th March כ"ט אדר	18 th March כ"ח אדר

Sotah 9:8-9

Sotah 9:10-11

Sotah 9:12-13

Sotah 9:14-15

Gittin 1:1-2

Sotah 1:3-4

