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Removing Leather Shoes

If a married man dies without having any children, his brother is required to either perform *yibum* (affectively marrying the *yavamah* – the widow) or *chalitzah*. The thirteenth *perek*, discusses the process of *chalitzah*. One of the essential components involves the *yavamah* untying and removing the brother's right leather shoe in front of the *beit din* (See *Mishnah* 12:6 for a description of the entire process). There are many other areas in *Halacha* where leather shoes are removed. For example, on *Yom Kippur* we do not wear leather shoes and mourners also remove their shoes. The question may be asked, what significance does the lack of leather footwear entail? To answer this question, the ideas brought by Rabbi Akiva Tatz (*Letters to a Buddhist Jew*, p273-274) will be presented.

Rabbi Tatz writes as follows:

You will notice that whenever a complete transcendence is experienced, it is facilitated by removing the shoes. The key is this: the shoes are to the body what the body is to the soul. Just as the shoes carry the body over rough ground, the body carries the soul through the world.

Rabbi Tatz continues using the shoe-body, body-soul relationships to explain transcendent experiences. For example the *kohanim* in the *Beit Ha'Mikdash* did not wear shoes. Similar *Moshe* was told to remove his shoes when *Hashem* spoke to him. "Contact with the higher world that necessitates detachment from the lower world is expressed by the removal of shoes."

Likewise on *Yom Kippur*, he notes, we break from the regular mode of elevating the soul through the physical, and engage in "temporary asceticism to free the soul." The removal of shoes presents one dimension of this endeavour.

In a similar vein, he explains that mourners remove their shoes in an expression of empathy with a soul that has left its body. He also notes that the parallel between a corpse and shoes expresses itself in a *Halacha* which requires one to wash their hands after touching them.

Yet how are we to understand the removal of the shoe as part of *chalitzah*? Rabbi Tatz explains as follows:

The deeper understanding is that such a marriage brings down a reincarnation of the deceased brother; the widow marries the living brother, a spark of the same root soul, to bring a child into the world for her late husband. The child is in fact an incarnation of the deceased...

But if her brother-in-law refuses to marry her, she removes his shoe. She is saying to him in very clear Torah terms: "You are refusing to marry me and bring down a child for your brother; you are keeping body and soul apart." What clearer image could there be to express this than separating of foot and shoe?

The *Melechet Shlomo* (*Yevamot* 12:6) also draws a connection between performing *chalitzah* and mourning. Quoting *Rabbeinu Yechiel*, he explains that the widow comes before *beit din* and laments that her husband has died without any off-spring. Not wanting to perform *yibum* the brother declares that he does not desire to take her. The implication is that he is not concerned that his brother has died without offspring. The response is for her to remove his shoe, thereby saying now you should certainly mourn for your brother as he has died without offspring.

David Bankier

This week's issue is dedicated to the memory of:

יוסף יהודיבן שלמה ע"ה

Revision Questions

במות י"ב:ב – י"ג:ט

- Which of the following is acceptable for *chalitzah*: (י"ב:ב)
 - Using a borrowed shoe?
 - Wearing the left shoe on the right foot?
 - Using a shoe that is the wrong size?
 - Performing *Chalitzah* at night?
- What are the three components of *chalitzah*? (י"ב:ג)
- Which of the three components: (י"ג:ג)
 - If left out is still acceptable?
 - May not be left out?
 - Is subject to debate whether it is acceptable if left out?
- Can a *cheresh* perform *chalitzah*? (י"ב:ד)
- What is the law regarding *chalitzah* that is performed before a *beit din* of two people? (י"ב:ה)
- Describe the process of *chalitzah*. (י"ב:ו)
- What is *mi'un*? (י"ג:א)
- What are the five points of debate between *Beit Shammai* and *Beit Hillel* regarding when *mi'un* can be performed? (י"ג:א)
- Who qualifies for *mi'un*? (י"ג:ב)
- According to *R' Eliezer ben Ya'akov* when is the *ketanah* considered "ishto"? (י"ג:ג)
- If a girl underwent *mi'un* can she still marry a *kohen*? (י"ג:ד)
- Complete the follow rule and explain: (י"ג:ד)

"זה הכלל: _____ אחר _____, אסורה לחזור לו. _____ אחר _____ מותרת לחזור לו"
- If the *ketanah* left a number of husbands, some of which through *mi'un* and the others through a *get*, which can she remarry? (י"ג:ה)
- Explain the debate regarding *yibum* for a woman that had previously divorced and then remarried her husband? (י"ג:ו)
- If two brothers marry two sisters, one of which a *ketanah* (*yetomah*), and the brother married to the *gedolah* dies (without children), what is the law regarding *yibum*? (Include the three opinions) (י"ג:ז)
- If a person married to a *pikachat* and a *cheireshet*, dies without any children, to who should *yibum* be perform? (י"ג:ח)
- If a person married to two *ketanot* (*yetamot*) dies, and one brother performs *yibum* to one and then another brother tries to perform *yibum* to the other, can the first brother stay with the *ketanah*? (י"ג:ט)

Local Shiurim

Sunday -Thursday
Between mincha & ma'ariv
Mizrachi Shul

Friday & Shabbat
10 minutes before mincha
Mizrachi Shul

Audio Shiurim on-line!

- 613.org/mishnah.html
- www.shemayisrael.com/mishna/

Finding Yevamot a little complicated?

Get the learning aids on-line at:

www.mishnahyomit.com

Next Week's Mishnayot...

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	שבת קודש
24 th September ב' תשרי ראש השנה Yevamot 13:10-11	25 th September ג' תשרי צום גדלי' Yevamot 13:12-13	26 th September ד' תשרי Yevamot 14:1-2	27 th September ה' תשרי Yevamot 14:3-4	28 th September ו' תשרי Yevamot 14:5-6	29 th September ז' תשרי Yevamot 14:7-8	30 th September ח' תשרי Yevamot 14:9-15:1

