

בס"ד

דברי תורה ד'צבי אליהו
DIVREI TORAH

כי תצא

Ki Setzei

August 29, 2009 - 9 Elul 5769

Dedication Page

To My

Ayshes Chayil

In Honor of Our
34th Wedding Anniversary



Love

Me



Dedication Page

In Memory of a
Loving and Devoted
Mother and Grandmother

Mildred Schwartz
on her Yahtzeit

Philip, Barbara, and Family

Parapet Rabbi Adam Singer

Do what's right. Even if it seems hopeless, even if success seems untenable; do what you know is right. We are rarely, if ever, granted a view of how all of life is supposed to unfold. At times, there are circumstances when what we know is right seems hopelessly impractical. There are times when doing the right thing seems so small compared with all of those who don't do right and are not a part of the solution. Still, even at these times, even when fate seems stacked against us, the Torah enjoins us to do what we know right, no matter how fruitless it might seem.

This message of doing what's right underlies the mitzvah in this week's parsha of building a protective fence around one's roof. In Vayikra 22:8 the Torah teaches that when a person builds a new house, he must build a fence around his roof to prevent someone from falling off.

The verse gives an unusual explanation for why this fence is necessary: "...you shall make a fence for your roof, and you should not place blood in your house when **the one who falls, falls from it**" (**Vayikra 22:8**). In Hebrew, the word for "the one who falls" looks very out of place here. It is akin to saying that we should prevent the "one who falls off" from falling off of our roof. There are a few questions we should ask here. Why does the Torah repeat the term fall? Wouldn't it be enough to simply say that we should build a fence so no one should fall from it? Isn't it repetitive to refer to tell us to prevent "the one who **falls**" from "**falling**"?

Rashi (11th cent., France) explains that the term "the one who falls" refers to someone who somehow deserves to fall. We are a people who believe in Divine punishment. Somehow there are those crimes against G-d or humanity which may be punishable through what seems to be the chance occurrence of stumbling off a roof. Please, make no mistake here. Just because a person trips, falls, or is otherwise hurt it does not mean that this person is being punished for some type of crime. However, the concept exists within Judaism that a person may be held liable for his actions and be punished by something as dreadful as falling off a building. That in itself is an awesome idea; the concept that a person may be held liable for his actions in ways one might never have conceived. But the actual mitzvah to build a fence around one's roof is deeper than this.

When the Torah tells us to build a fence around our roofs, it is not just a protection so that others shouldn't carelessly cause themselves injury, it is an enjoinder that even when a person is deserving of punishment, even when something bad is deservedly going to happen to this individual, if it is not our place to mete out this punishment, it is our *obligation* to prevent ourselves and our property from doing any harm. Even though a person may deserve punishment, if we are not the ones who are supposed to be carrying out this action, it is our obligation to see to it that our property not be a part of this punishment. Even though a person may have done wrong, and even though he may be deserving of punishment, it is not our place to deliver this punishment. Our role is to do what is right and to protect others from harm wherever possible.

We live in an age of information where we know more about each other, celebrities, and just plain random individuals than anyone could ever rightfully really want to know. The information floats in cyberspace, in media, and in conversations everywhere around us. In all these situations we can feel justified or empowered to act harshly against another individual in words or speech. Yet it is the Torah's clear injunction to us to understand our role. Our purpose is to do what we know is right for us in our situation. Even

for those whose destiny might be for punishment or any dark fate, it is our role to prevent ourselves and our property from damaging in any way or form.

In all of our actions and all of the circumstances we create through our possessions, may we be aware of the pitfalls we may create for others, and do right and act for the benefit of all of those around us. GOOD SHABBOS!!!