

DAF TSAFON

6 September 2025
13 Elul 5785

Parashat Ki Tetzei
ArtScroll 1046 Hertz 840



The opening verses of Parasha Ki Tetzei present the law known as “eishet yefat to’ar”, which applies in situations of warfare. The Torah addresses the situation of a soldier, who in the course of military conflict, sees and desires a woman who was captured from the enemy nation, and the Torah outlines the procedure he should follow if he wishes to marry the woman. After bringing her home, he must allow her a one month, period to mourn and take measures to make her less attractive. If the soldier still desires her, then he may marry her, and if he does not, then he must set her free.

A number of commentators noted that in describing the soldier’s initial attraction to the captive woman, the Torah uses the word “chashakta” (21:11), whereas later, when it speaks of the soldier’s eventual disinterest in the woman, it says, “im lo chafatza bah” – “if you do not want her” (21:14). Rabbi David Silverberg has suggested that the verb “ch.sh.k.” denotes instinctive lust and desire, whereas “ch.f.tz.” refers to a genuine wish that one has after making a reasoned, calculated decision that this is something beneficial. Like the soldier described by the Torah, our instinctive “cheishek” is sometimes at odds with our true “cheifetz”; we are lured and misled by the charm and external appeal of certain ideas and are tempted to embrace them without a second thought.

As we have discussed many times, often it is the Halacha which on the surface has nothing to do with our current lives that teaches us the most important principles. Our parasha, as has been explained by the masters of Chassidism and mussar - piety and ethics - describes the fight against the yetzer harah - the evil inclination. The yetzer harah is often described as a seducer who leads the innocent man astray. It is her allure that blinds the man of her true intentions.

We live in a multicultural society and during our encounters with other cultures, we often come across an “eishet yefat to’ar” – elements that appear attractive, compelling and appealing, and we are naturally and instinctively drawn to them. The law presented here by the Torah warns us that before we embrace these ideas and implant them within our value system, we must exercise patience, giving ourselves time to think the matter through, and waiting until the glitter and initial attraction fade. If, after a period of careful consideration and honest, objective assessment, we determine that this is something of value that ought to be embraced, then the Torah instructs us to do so. In some instances, however, after this waiting period, when we are able to look beyond the alluring, external trappings, we find that the idea, value or practice in question is not something we wish to bring into Jewish life, in which case we are to let it go.

The law of the “eishet yefat to’ar” alerts us to the need to be careful and discerning before we embrace newly-discovered concepts and ideas, and ensure that we are not just falling prey to their external charm and appeal.

Shabbat Shalom

Haftarah

ArtScroll 1201 Hertz 857

THE NEW COVENANT OF PEACE

Isaiah LIV, 1-10

Isaiah foresees the time when the exiles will return from captivity, and the cities of the Holy Land will be repopulated more than ever before. As a deserted wife returning to her husband, so will Israel be reunited with God and her former humiliation forgotten, for God’s anger was momentary. Just as He had sworn ‘that the waters of Noah would no more, go over the Earth’, so His new covenant of peace with Israel would be everlasting.

מזל טוב
Wedding anniversary

Angela and Greg Turek

מזל טוב
Bar & Bat Mitzvah anniversaries

Ian Bernard
David Goldstein
Garry Walter AM

Rachel Jaku

**Our congregation acknowledges the following
yahrzeit anniversaries and wishes long life to those
who are commemorating a yahrzeit
during the coming week.**

חיים ארוכים

Naim Basri	uncle of Sasson Inbari
Jack Beder	father of Jefferson Beder
Helen Bell	mother of Michael Bell
Allan Berman	brother of Errol Berman
Helena Bertram	mother-in-law of Chaya Bertram, grandmother of Richard Bertram
Naida Collins	sister of Trevor Collins
Mark Robert Fisher	Honorary Life Member of The North Shore Synagogue
Alfred Goodman	stepfather of Sharon Milch
Ethne Gorfinkel	mother of Peter Gorfinkel
Alice Kaufman	aunt of Beulah Blieden
Leon Klinger	grandfather of Ron Klinger
Hertzel Levin	father-in-law of Alan Aarons
Manfred Mankowitz	father of Sharon Baskin
Naomi Miller	mother of Jules Miller
Abraham Sonenfeld	grandfather of Sandra Fisher
Leon Tofler	father of Stephen Tofler