

FYI: This parsha has 74 Mitzvot, 110 p'sukim, 1582 words, 5856 letters.

Amongst the many Mitzvot in this parsha we find the Mitzvah of the newlywed, *“VE'SIMACH ET ISHTO ASHER LAKACH”* [and he (the Chatan) shall gladden his wife whom he has married](24:5) The Torah specifies that a Chatan is exempt from military service for the entire first year of marriage, so that he may bring joy to his wife.

This exemption only applies to a *Mil'chemet Reshut*, a political or economic war, but not to a *Mil'chemet Mitzvah*, such as destroying Amalek, or fighting the original seven nations in the days of Yehoshua, or what we are currently in, a war to defend and protect the lives of the Jewish population that is being attacked and threatened. During a *Mil'chemet Mitzvah* it is a Mitzvah for every able-bodied person to serve and protect Jewish lives, and that includes even a newlywed. (Sotah 44b). During a *Mil'chemet Reshut*, even one who is *Mekadesh* a woman but did not yet marry her (with Chupa), can also take a military service exemption, see Parshat Shoftim (20:7), but there is a difference. The Chatan in our parsha who is fully married, he gets a full year complete exemption, but the one who is only engaged but not married, since he need not be home, his exemption only excuses him from service in the front lines, but he must serve in the rear to assist the troops or do *Sheh'eirut Le'umi*. The Gemara (44a) learns this from the words *“LO YEITZEI BA'TZAVA VE'LOH YA'AVOR ALAV”* (24:5,)*[he shall not go out to the army, nor shall it obligate him in any manner]*.

A newlywed Chatan is required to remain home for the entire first year “to gladden his wife”. What about the Chatan, who gladdens **him**? So Rashi cites the Targum that reads *“VeYach'dei IM It'tetei”*, meaning they gladden together, one another. The Rambam and Sefer HaChinuch rule in accordance with this interpretation, stating *“VeSimach Imah”*, **he** should be happy **WITH** her, and the “Et” in the pasuk, means with her, as in ET HA'ELOKIM HIT'HALECH NO'ACH”, No'ach went **with** G-d.”

Only problem with this approach, as Rashi notes, is that the word should have been *“VE'SAMACH”* Et Ishtoh, and not *VE'SIMACH* Et Ishtoh. For *VE'SAMACH* means he, together with her, are making each other happy, but *VE'SIMACH* means **he** alone is causing her happiness, without any benefit to himself. However, understanding human relationships, and marriage dynamics, we can understand how a man, by bringing happiness to his wife, brings total happiness to himself as well. In a marriage, a woman wants to receive her happiness from her husband, he is the center of her life from which she seeks her ultimate fulfillment, [that is why the kallah circles the Chattan under the chuppa seven times] and it is the man's desire to be the source of his wife's fulfillment. Thus, the Torah is teaching us that a man should be dedicated solely to making his wife happy. In this manner, **he** will ultimately bring joy upon himself as well. The passuk therefore means- the exemption from the army is **one year, but the vesimach et ishto [making his wife happy]- is a lifetime requirement!!**

Shabbat Shalom from Yerushalayim Ir HaKodesh,
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