

**MORASHAH**  
**THE RABBINIC FELLOWSHIP OF THE UTJ**  
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Rabbi Irvin S. Beigel

*Parashat HaShavuah Series*

**Parashat Ki Tetze**

How much energy is spent by Jews in battling other Jews! It is natural that there are disagreements amongst us. The differences are theological and political. With all the disagreements, there are still matters on which most Jews and most Jewish organizations agree. When we work together with other Jews, we are able to fight against our common enemies.

The Baal Shem Tov, the founder of Hasidism, and others see in our *parasha* a teaching about the battles we each fight within ourselves.

“When you go to war against your enemies, and the Lord your God delivers them into your hands, and you take captives of them” (Deuteronomy 21:10)

The word “you” in the verse quoted is singular. Each one of us is constantly at war against the *yetzer hara* (the evil inclination), which is the ever-present enemy within us. The verse in the Torah assures us that we will triumph in the battle and take the enemy captive. When we capture the *yetzer hara*, we then can redirect the passion and desire of the enemy towards constructive goals. The passion that can lead to sin can be redirected to building family life. The envy of others that can lead us into questionable financial dealings can be directed to doing good for others and to the study of Torah.

The war within us and the battles we fight in the world are dependent on each other. We cannot emerge victorious in one field of battle and lose on the other. As we approach the *Yamim Nora'im* (the Days of Awe), we will take stock of ourselves and of our communities. As we reflect, may we be strengthened to win the battles that we, as individuals and as a holy nation, will need to fight in the coming year.

*Shabbat Shalom!*

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The Union for Traditional Judaism is a trans-denominational organization dedicated to bringing the message of open-minded Halakhic Judaism to the widest possible audience.

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