

MITZVAH 46 AND 47: YIBUM AND CHALITZAH

by Rabbi Moshe Goldberger

"If brothers live together and one dies without a child, the wife may not marry another man. Rather, her brother-in-law should marry her... If the man doesn't want to marry his sister-in-law, she should go to the gate, to the elders, and say, "My brother-in-law refuses to establish a name for his brother in Israel..." (Devarim 25:5, 7)

If a man dies without children, there is a mitzvah for his brother to marry the widow and thus perpetuate his name. If this is not practical, the brother participates in chalitzah, a shoe removal ceremony, instead. Nowadays, only chalitzah is performed because we are unable to have the pure intentions required for yibum (Yevamos 39a).

The widow may not marry anyone else before she does the chalitzah ceremony.

The oldest brother is the first choice for performing the mitzvah.

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