

a momento from

# CELEBRATING *di Chassidische Heim*

*Woman: The Foundation of Her Home*

MONDAY, 18 ADAR  
MARCH 9, 2015



This evening is lovingly dedicated to the lasting memories of

שלמה זלמן בן יונה ע"ה  
שיינדל בת יצחק ע"ה

*Woman:  
The Foundation  
of her Home*

# *Tender Care for the Neshama*



Generally speaking, there are two methods that might be employed when seeking to influence human behavior: stern rebuke, or gentle, kindly words.

The way of Torah is the way of peace and bringing others close. Hashem is good, and it is His desire that those who do His work apply themselves with kindness and love.

Because the woman has been blessed with an innately tender and sympathetic nature, her character is akin to, and expressive of, the Torah ideal of compassionate bringing close. Thus, she possesses a great capacity to influence her fellow Jews to discipline their behavior in accordance with the way of Torah.

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The human being possesses both a body and a soul. The Jew sees the body and the soul as interrelated, indeed bound together; as such, by examining a physical phenomenon, we gain insight into its spiritual counterpart.

When a person is ill, he consults a doctor. The doctor, who understands the physical workings of the body, diagnoses the nature of the illness and prescribes treatment. If the case warrants, hospital care is recommended. The organization of the hospital is such that whereas the doctor prescribes the treatment, the nurse is the one who usually administers it.

Regarding this, it may be noted that nursing is predominately a woman's field—a fact readily discernible in hospitals, where, with rare exception,



the nurses are women. This reflects the fact that women are inherently better suited to nursing. With their natural tenderness and patience, they can sweeten a bitter-tasting medicine and make a most difficult medical procedure more tolerable.

The same is true regarding the care of the soul. If a Jew suffers from a deficiency in his spiritual health, it becomes necessary to treat him or her with the appropriate cure. To procure a remedy for his spiritual ills, one must consult the one who, like the doctor who is the expert for the body's needs, knows and understands the needs of the soul.

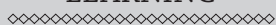
For the Jew, these needs are embodied by the Torah and its precepts. But the expert who diagnoses and prescribes the treatment is not necessarily the one who is best suited to administer it. Thus we come to the role of the spiritual "nurse"—an individual with the compassion, sensitivity and patience that the task requires.

As is the case regarding physical medicine, the woman has been blessed with a character that makes her optimally suited to serve as a spiritual "nurse"—one who draws one's fellow Jews close to Torah with kindness, benevolence, gentility and love.

A woman's strength is such that she can prevail upon others to fulfill the precepts, including those that, on the surface, might seem difficult or "bitter tasting"—with willful acceptance and joy.

*(Excerpt from a yechidus with the women leadership of Chabad of Worcester, Massachusetts, 5713 (1953))*

## ENCOURAGING THE HUSBAND'S LEARNING



In preparation for Rosh Hashana 1961 (תשכ"ב), the Rebbe wrote a letter to women about the need for a cheshbon hanefesh concerning the Torah study of their husbands. The Rebbe explained that it is the women's duty to encourage and strengthen the learning of their husbands, brothers and sons, and they should demand (!) of their husbands to maintain a daily learning schedule, so that the sight of his wife will already remind him to go learn.

The Rebbe notes the great reward which women receive from their portion in the mitzva, and asked that all women requesting a bracha of the Rebbe for the coming year should include a report of all the learning done by their husbands.

*(Igros Kodesh, Vol. 20, p. 330)*

# A Primary Role

To the Editors of: "A Woman of Valor —  
an anthology for the thinking Jewess."

Greetings and Blessing:

I am pleased to be informed that you are preparing to publish an anthology on the role of the Jewish woman in the home, family and in Jewish life in general. The following remarks are in response to your request to comment on this vital subject.

In a Jewish household, the wife and mother, the *Akeres Habayis*, largely determines the set-up and atmosphere of the entire home.

G d demands that the Jewish home — every Jewish home — be quite different from a non-Jewish home, not only on Shabbos and Yom Tov, but also on the ordinary weekdays and in "weekday" matters. It must be a Jewish home in every respect.

## A MOTHER'S INFLUENCE



Women are called the *Akeres Habayis* since they are the "ikar" (the main part) of the home. It is clearly observable that the primary education of young children and even infants is accomplished not by the father, melamed, rosh yeshivah, or the rov — but by the child's own mother.

(24 Elul, 5748 (1988)  
to Nshei U'Bnos Yisroel;  
*Toras Menachem*, Vol. 4, p. 341)

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entire home.***

What makes a Jewish household different from a non-Jewish household is that it is conducted in all its details according to the directives of the Torah, *Toras Chayim* — meaning that it is the Jew's Guide in daily life — given by G d. Hence the home becomes an abode for G d's Presence, a home for G dliness, one of which G d says: "Make

Me a sanctuary and I shall dwell among them." (Exod. 25:5).

It is a home where G d's Presence is felt not only on Shabbos and Yom Tov, but on every day of the week; and not only when *Davenning* and learning Torah, but also when engaged in very ordinary things, such as eating and drinking, etc., in accordance with the directive, "Know Him in all your ways."

It is a home where mealtime is not a time for indulging in ordinary and natural "eating habits" but a hallowed serve to G d, where the table is an "altar" to G d, sanctified by the washing of the hands before the meal, reciting the blessings over the food, and Grace after the meal, with every item of food and beverage brought into the home being strictly kosher.

It is a home where the mutual relationship between husband and wife is sanctified by the meticulous observance of the laws and regulations of *Taharas Hamishpoch*, and permeated with awareness of the active third "Partner" — G d — in creating new life, in fulfillment of the Divine commandment: "Be fruitful and multiply." This also ensures that Jewish children are born in purity and holiness, with pure hearts and minds that will enable them to resist temptation and avoid the pitfalls of the environment when they grow up. Moreover, the strict observance of *Taharas Hamishpoch* is a basic factor in the preservation of peace and

## THE ALTER REBBE'S MOTHER



Chassidim once asked Maharil, the Alter Rebbe's brother, what was the *zechus* that merited his parents to have four sons who were Torah giants. He replied that it was probably due to the *yiras Shamayim* and the passionate love of Torah of his mother, Rebbetzin Rivkah. To illustrate this he shared the following story:

My father, Reb Baruch, once traveled on a business trip and brought back an expensive coat as a gift for my mother. Our melamed's wife became very jealous, and began nagging him to give her gifts as well. This had an effect on him, and his usual enthusiasm was lacking. Noticing this, my mother questioned him and he told her of his troubles. Without hesitation, my mother took out her coat and gave it to the melamed, saying, "Give this to your wife, and continue to teach my sons with enthusiasm."

(*Reshimos Devarim* p. 198)

harmony (Sholom Bayis) in the home, which is vitally strengthened and fortified thereby — obviously, a basic factor in the preservation of the family as a unit.

It is a home where the parents know that their first obligation is to instill into their offspring from their most tender age on, the love of G d and also the fear of G d, permeating them with the joy of performing Mitzvos. With all their desire to provide their children with all the good things in life, the Jewish parent must know that the greatest, indeed the only real and eternal, legacy they can bequeath to their children is to make the Torah and Mitzvos and traditions their life-source and guide in daily life.

In all that has been said above, the Jewish wife and mother — the *Akeres Habayis* — has a primary role, second to none.

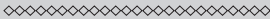
It is largely — and in many respects exclusively — her great task and privilege to give her home its truly Jewish atmosphere. She has been entrusted with, and is completely in charge of, the kashrus of the foods and beverages that come into her kitchen and on the dining table.

She has been given the privilege of ushering in the holy Shabbos by lighting the candles on Friday, in ample time before sunset. Thus, she actually and

symbolically brightens up her home and peace and harmony and with the light of Torah and Mitzvos. It is largely in her merits that G d bestows the blessing of true happiness on her husband and children and the entire household.

In addition to such Mitzvos as candle-lighting, *Challah* and others which the Torah entrusted primarily to Jewish daughters, there are matters which, in the natural order of things, lie in the woman's domain. The reason for this being so in the natural order is that it stems from the supra-natural order of holiness, which is the source and origin of the good in the physical world. We refer, of course, to the observance of *Taharas Hamishpocho* which, in the nature of it, is in the hands of the

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(24 Elul, 5748 (1988)  
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Jewish women. The husband is required to encourage and facilitate this mutual observance; certainly not hinder it in any way, G d forbid. But the main responsibility — and privilege — is the wife's.

This is the great task and mission which G d gave to Jewish women — to observe and disseminate the observance of *Taharas Hamishpocha*, and of the other vital institutions of Jewish family life. For besides being the fundamental Mitzvos and the cornerstone of the sanctity of Jewish family life, as well as relating to the well-being of the children in body and soul — these pervade and extend through all Jewish generations to eternity.

***It is to be remembered that the Creator has provided each and every Jewish woman with the capacity to carry the most in daily life in the fullest measure, for otherwise, it would not be logical or fair of G d to give obligations and duties which are impossible to fulfill.***

Finally, it is to be remembered that the Creator has provided each and every Jewish woman with the capacity to carry the most in daily life in the fullest measure, for otherwise, it would not be logical or fair of G d to give obligations and duties which are impossible to fulfill.

The points mentioned above — all too briefly in relation to their vital importance for our people Israel, individually and collectively, especially in the present day and age, as discussed at greater length elsewhere — should be the objects of intensive and widespread activity by Jewish women everywhere. There is a crying need to bring them to the attention, and within living experience, of the widest possible Jewish circles. There can be no danger of overemphasizing these vital aspects of Jewish life, nor of over publishing on these subjects. Every additional volume — as the present one — is to be heartily welcomed, and those who share in this effort should be warmly congratulated.

With prayerful wishes for Hatzlocho in the fulfillment of the above task, and with blessing for a *Kesivo VaChasimo Toivo*.

*(From a letter on 18th of Elul, 5735 (1975))*



# *Sharing the Beauty*



The job and shlichus of women in this generation is to implant and permeate in children the knowledge of the Torah's goodness: "its merchandise is superior to all other merchandise."

The child must understand that it's not just good because he will be patted on the shoulder and told that he's a good student, but because the Torah itself is greater than even "Heavenly desires" (mitzvos), and because specifically through Torah one unites with Hashem in a complete union.

As explained elsewhere based on the Zohar, even when studying the revealed portion of the Torah, and even just "komatz Alef – uh" which is rooted in the Alef of Anochi [of the Aseres HaDibros], one attains the greatest union with Hashem, so long as the study is done for the sake of causing Hashem pleasure.

This is the way to bring the future geulah soon, in a proud and miraculous manner.

*(Yud Shvat, 5723 (1963); Toras Menachem, vol. 36, p. 132)*

# *A Bracha in the Home*



Since the women are the ones who manage the home, putting out the money for groceries and other expenses, they are often more concerned how to balance the expenses with the income. And since they are more involved with material matters, which is why they are exempted from several mitzvos including Torah study, it comes as no surprise that they lend more weight to materialism, and its significance seems greater than it really is.

In a similar sense, businessmen, due to their preoccupation with materialism, must invest greater effort to discard the misconception that success in parnassa is a result of intelligence. They must realize that the



# Ladies First!



The second occasion on which women are mentioned before men is the Torah's account of how the people contributed valuables and building materials for the Mishkan and its furnishings. One should keep in mind that the Beis HaMikdash is not a temporary, one-time edifice. Rather, every Jewish home builds a Beis HaMikdash, in fulfillment of the command, "And they shall build Me a Mikdash and I will dwell among them."

In the wilderness, when Hashem desired to bestow upon our people the greatest gift possible, the construction of a Sanctuary for His Name, even though "the silver is Mine and the gold is Mine" He asked them to contribute the necessary materials. And the first to respond were the women, who brought four kinds of gold jewelry. As understood by Ibn Ezra, these comprised rings worn on the ears, nose and fingers, and bracelets.

***Mothers and fathers must know, however, that merely wanting is not enough: one must take such action as will turn that desire into a practical reality.***

Only a husband and a wife together can transform the life of their family into a Beis HaMikdash, but it is the woman who must take the first step. She must make a spiritual contribution of four kinds of jewelry towards their children's education, for it is this that will turn their home into a Sanctuary for Torah and mitzvos, a place in which Hashem's Name will abide and which He will bless with happiness.

**(1) Earrings:** Contributing one's earrings signifies listening attentively to the directives of the holy Torah and gedolei Yisroel on how to bring up children and how to conduct a Jewish home. It also signifies listening attentively to how one's sons and daughters speak among themselves and with their respective friends. Since the tone of their speech normally echoes what they hear from their parents at home, the parents' speech needs to set an example of respect and refinement.

**(2) Noserings:** The second kind of jewelry, noserings, suggests the sense

of smell. A mother needs to be sensitive to the question of which boys and girls her children come in contact with and exchange home visits with, and she needs to monitor these contacts.

**(3) Finger rings:** The third kind, rings worn on the finger, suggests that building a Mikdash at home needs something more than the two previous kinds of jewelry. One also needs to point the way. One needs to explain the child the consequences of obedience and proper conduct and (chas vechalilah) of disobedience and improper conduct.

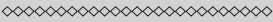
**(4) Bracelet:** The fourth kind of jewelry mentioned is the bracelet. Children should be brought up with a firm hand, not only when they are disobedient, but also when they are obedient, in order to arouse a lively interest in tackling their studies conscientiously.

I am certain that all or almost all of those present would like to see their children growing up with not only physical but also spiritual health, as observers of the Torah and its mitzvos. Mothers and fathers must know, however, that merely wanting is not enough: one must take such action as will turn that desire into a practical reality.

If so, give your children the fine and wholesome upbringing of yesteryear. Enroll your sons in devout chadarim and in yeshivos in which Torah is studied in a spirit of yiras Shamayim, and entrust your daughters to the hands of devout educators. Your children will then grow up observing Torah and mitzvos. Dedicate your spiritual jewelry and build a Beis HaMikdash, and then you will be “blessed with a generation of upright offspring,” with children who will bring you material and spiritual nachas.

(Likutei Diburim (SIE), Vol. 5, p. 235)

### THE WOMAN'S HEART



When a home is run by an *Akeres Habayis* whose heart is a Mishkan for Hashem, and her conduct follows the instructions of the Torah, it can be seen in the conduct of her husband, sons, and daughters, whose thought, speech, and action are permeated with creating a Mishkan for Hashem.

Even the mundane vessels in the home become permeated with kedushah and G-dliness, as befits a home that is a Mishkan, about which Hashem said, “I will dwell within them.” And this brings peace and achdus in the home amongst all the family members.

(25 Iyar, 5747 (1987)  
to Nshei U'Bnos Chabad; *Toras  
Menachem* 5747, Vol. 3, p. 345)

## USHERING IN THE GEULAH



The birth, salvation, and education of the Savior of Israel (Moshe Rabbeinu) came from the devotion of two Jewish women, Moshe's mother Yocheved and his sister Miriam.

At a time when the decrees of Paroh's enslavement reached the height of difficulty, to the point where even the strongest in the generation became dispirited, these two women were not discouraged. They continued their work with true mesirus nefesh to give life to the children, and in the depths of galus they established the generation of geulah. With their dedication and courage they saved not only the women, but the men as well, including the Savior of Israel who would take the Bnei Yisrael from slavery to freedom.

So, too, in the last generations of this bitter exile, and particularly in our generation, this role, responsibility, and merit was given to the women of this final galus.

*(Igros Kodesh, Vol. 22, p. 424)*

## *Infusing Excitement in Children*



The mitzvah of chinuch, to enforce the observance of mitzvot by children, is primarily the obligation of the father. However, practically speaking, the mother is the one who spends the most time with her children, and she is the one who raises them.

Furthermore, the mother has an advantage since she educates in a soft-spoken manner, expressing feelings of closeness, love and affection. Particularly in recent time, this approach of education is more successful.

The same is true for the Torah study. Although, it is the obligation of the father to teach his son Torah, nonetheless, it is the mother who helps and encourages her sons to learn. Just as Chazal state that the mothers have a share in their sons' studies because of the physical help that they offer, the same is true for support and encouragement.

One way this is done is by asking the child about his learning in cheder or yeshivah. As is clearly observable, the mother's warmth and excitement can cause the boy to become extra excited about his learning (unlike the father's weekly test).

*(From Sefer HaShichos 5750, Vol. 2, p. 455)*



# The Mother's Role



When a child is born, the mother knows that HaShem has given her the ability to guide him from the first moment along the proper path, so that it stays with him for his entire life and he remains a Jew. Since HaShem expects this of a Jewish woman, it is obvious that He has empowered her to carry out this shlichus in the most perfect and complete manner.

Only later in a child's life does the role of the husband and father begin – to help the child advance higher and higher.

However, one should not think that from this point the mother's role is minor or unimportant. For, as we know, the highest rank that a Jewish child can possibly reach is that of a Kohen Gadol, for above the Yisroelim there are leviyim, higher yet are kohanim, and the individual at the highest level among them is the Kohen Gadol.

The Gemara relates that the reason that a certain family merited that its sons should become Kohanim Gedolim is that their mother conducted herself as a Jewish daughter should, in the matter of modesty, even when she was in her own home. It was in this merit that she was blessed with

## A UNIQUE CONTRIBUTION

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The sun and the moon were created as “the two great luminaries,” but each has been given its own place and function. The moon acts as a reflector and transmitter of the sun's light. In this way it has a special quality in that it transmits the solar light and energy to those areas in nature where direct sunlight would be too intense to be of benefit.

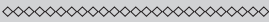
Similarly the worthy Jewish wife, in many respects, must reflect and transmit the Torah way of life of her husband to the entire household, and it is in this way that she fulfills her great responsibility and privilege of being the *Akeres Habayis*. At the same time there are areas in Jewish life where the Jewish woman, rather than the man, can make the greatest contribution, using her special qualities to best and fullest advantage.

*(Excerpt from a letter, Rosh Chodesh Adar I, 5730 (1970))*

sons who reached the highest level – the level of Kohanim Gedolim. (From this we can likewise imagine what a great level her daughters reached.)

Now, whenever the Torah relates something, it is not merely to tell us a nice story. Rather, it is an example and a lesson for every individual in whatever relates to him.

ENCOURAGING  
THE HUSBAND'S  
LEARNING



In preparation for Rosh Hashana 1961 (תשכ"ב), the Rebbe wrote a letter to women about the need for a cheshbon hanefesh concerning the Torah study of their husbands. The Rebbe explained that it is the women's duty to encourage and strengthen the learning of their husbands, brothers and sons, and they should demand (!) of their husbands to maintain a daily learning schedule, so that the sight of his wife will already remind him to go learn.

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*(Igros Kodesh, Vol. 20, p. 330)*

The lesson from this story is that women today must know that HaShem has given them special powers and special brachos, so that if they establish their home as it should be established, they can be sure that their children will remain Jews, to the full degree that HaShem expects of them, for their entire life.

When a home is directed in a modest manner, which depends on the living example of the mother of the home, not only will the children follow the positive directives of their father, but the mother will also be enabled to see how her children gain increasingly from their father's efforts, until they reach the highest level in Yiddishkeit, purity and holiness.

They will also be granted ample parnassa, which is such a lofty bracha that the Kohen Gadol himself was blessed with it. True, today the Beis HaMikdash has not yet been rebuilt, but every Jewish mother is able to prepare her children to grow to the level of a Kohen Gadol – to be Jews in the fullest measure, and to continue growing higher and higher in their Yiddishkeit.

And this all depends on the education which the mother gives the children

and the way the home is set up, first and foremost by the way she conducts herself in tznius, kashrus and in all other mitzvos. It is then certain that HaShem will fulfill his promise and grant her all these brachos.

*(25 Iyar 5729 (1969), at the Nshei U'Bnos Chabad Convention; Sichos Kodesh 5729, Vol. 2, p. 128)*

## *Setting the Tone of the Home*



The daughters of Tzlafchad cherished Eretz Yisroel, to make of it "a good and spacious land" – "a land on which the eyes of HaShem are focused" throughout the entire year.

This task is entrusted to "the daughters of Tzlafchad," the women and girls of every generation – to endear Eretz Yisroel to themselves, to their husbands and to their children, and to create "Eretz Yisroel" wherever they live. This is accomplished through a lifestyle of Torah and mitzvos, practiced with chassidishe liveliness. This will bring about the complete Geula, when they will go forth together with their husbands and children, an entire generation of "our young people and our old folk, our sons and our daughters," to greet our Righteous Moshiach.

Doing so does not require miraculous feats. One only needs to reflect every day on whether one's conduct is in harmony with the way a Yiddishe home and a chassidishe home should be conducted. One should consider whether each of one's actions is appropriate for Jewish daughters, all of whom, without exception, are likened to Sarah, Rivkah, Rochel and Leah, who established the foundations of the House of Israel.

When women begin to think in this direction, and their husbands assist them, they will each establish a new home for HaShem.

*(Yud-Beis Tammuz, 5716 (1956); Toras Menachem, Vol. 17, p. 66)*

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