

Following publication of Challenge - An Encounter with Chabad in Israel, the Rebbe suggested to the Kallah's Booba & Zaida that their next book should be "An Anthology for Women" The following is the original letter sent to them by the Rebbe which was used as the foreword for "Woman of Valour." At the time of writing the letter the title of the book was not yet finalised and therefore it was left blank by the Rebbe.

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By the Grace of G-d
18th of Elul, 5735
Brooklyn, N. Y.

To the Editors of

Greeting 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.

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In a Jewish household, the wife and mother, the Akeres Habayis, largely determines the setup 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.

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 the 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 every day of the week; and not only when davvening 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 service 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, ~~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 Hamishpocho, 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, pure 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 Hamishpocho is a basic factor in the preservation of peace and harmony (Sholom Bayis) in the home, which is vitally strengthened and fortified thereby - obviously, a basic factor in the preservation of the family/unit; ~~mentioned above~~.

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 doing Mitzvos. With ~~all~~ their desire to provide their children

must
with all the good things in life, the Jewish parent know that the greatest,
indeed the only real and eternal, legacy they can leave their children
is to make the Torah and Mitzvos and traditions their life-source and
guide in the 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 with peace
and harmony and with the light of Torah and Mitzvos. It is largely in
her merits that G-d bestows the ~~true~~ 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 (for which
~~there is actually no competing reason, either naturally or originally~~)
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~~
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 Tahar^us Hamishpocho, which, in the nature of it, is

in the hands of the 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 Hamishpocho, and of the other vital institutions of Jewish family life. For besides being fundamental Mitzvos and ~~ritual~~ cornerstones of the ~~foundation~~ sanctity of Jewish family life, as well as relating to the wellbeing of the children in body and soul - these pervade and extend through all Jewish generations to eternity.

Finally, it is to be remembered that ~~the Creator~~ ^{the Creator} ~~has never doubtless these~~ ~~ritual~~ Divinely ~~given vital tasks may seem~~ ^{in the daily life} and every Jewish woman with the capacity to carry them out/in the fullest measure, for, otherwise, it would not be logical or 'fair' of G-d to give impossible obligations and duties which are ~~too difficult~~ to fulfil.

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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 overpublishing on these subjects. Every additional volume - ^{as} ~~and~~ 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 fulfilment of the above task, and with blessing for a Kesivo vachasimo toivo,

M. Schneerson
MENACHEM SCHNEERSON