

תשורה משמחת נישואין

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ברוקלין, נ. י.

By the Grace of G-d
6th of Tishrei, 5745
Brooklyn, N.Y.

To the Mothers and Daughters
Of our People Israel, Everywhere

Blessing and Greeting:

You are surely aware of the most important role in Jewish life which the Torah — called *Toras Chaim* and *Toras Emes*, because it is our teacher and guide in life, whose instructions are the everlasting truth — has conferred upon the Jewish woman.

One of the meaningful expressions of this role is the title *Akeres Habayis* ("Foundation of the Jewish Home"), bestowed on every Jewish Balaboste. A similarly meaningful title is *Aishes Chayil* ("A Woman of Valor"). Indeed, King Shlomo, the Wisest of All Men, dedicates the entire concluding chapter of *Sefer Mishlei* (*Proverbs*) to the *Aishes Chayil*, with praises in the alphabetical order of all the letters of the Aleph-Beis, from *Aleph* to *Tov*.

As in all matters of Yiddishkeit, which are based on the principle that "Action is the essential thing," the said role of the Jewish woman has been specifically spelled out by our Torah, *Torah Or* (The Torah is Light), in terms of three fundamental Mitzvos. Though both men and women are duty-bound to observe these Mitzvos, their actual performance has been assigned to the woman, first and foremost. These three Mitzvos - in the order of their application in terms of age, from childhood on — are as follows:

1) *Hadlokas HaNer*. Lighting of the candles on Erev Shabbos and on Erev Yom Tov is a requirement in every Jewish

household. Yet, the duty and privilege of fulfilling this requirement has been given specifically to the Jewish woman. Only in unusual circumstances — as, for instance, in the absence of a woman in the house, and the like — it falls upon the man of the house to light the candles.

As in the case of all the Mitzvos of the Torah, requiring that a Jewish child should be educated in the performance of the Mitzvos from a very tender age, a girl of three years is generally considered ready for being educated in the matter of lighting a candle, with a Brocho, before Shabbos and Yom Tov under her mother's supervision. Our Sages relate that our Mother Rivkah lit an Erev-Shabbos-Kodesh candle at the age of three, carrying on the tradition of our Mother Sarah. Every Jewish mother who is blessed with a three-year-old daughter "Benching Licht" knows the thrilling experience that goes with it for both mother and daughter when joining in brightening up the home, with the sacred light of the Shabbos and Yom Tov candles. It is a Mitzvo that conspicuously reflects the quality of *Ner Mitzvo v'Torah Or* (A Mitzvo is a Candle and the Torah is Light) even to the human eye. Moreover, since G-d's reward is in kind, it surely is reciprocated by a generous measure of light and brightness illuminating their Mazel and whole life.

2) *Kashrus*. The Laws of Kashrus of foods and beverages are equally incumbent upon men and women. The particular importance of these laws can be deduced also from the fact that the foods and beverages a person consumes directly affect him or her, both physically and spiritually, since the food becomes part of one's flesh and blood. Again, the supervision and implementation of the Kashrus Laws, in the kitchen and in the house, have been entrusted primarily to the wife and mother. Indeed, the Halacha makes a special point of emphasizing her special status of credibility and reliability; that when she attests to the Kashrus of her kitchen and home, she is to be believed.

3) *Taharas Hamishpocho* (Laws of Family Purity). The extraordinary importance of the observance of Taharas Hamishpocho needs no lengthy elaboration. Suffice it to

mention that the observance of the laws and regulations of Taharas Hamishpocho has a very strong impact not only on the parents, but also on their children and offspring, to all posterity. Here again the husband and wife are both strictly obligated to observe these laws and regulations; yet, here too, the Halacha bestows on the wife a special status, as well as a special credibility as in the case of Kashrus.

The above three fundamental Mitzvos are three pillars on which the Jewish home and family life are founded. The fact that they have been assigned more specifically to the Jewish woman shows her unique position of responsibility and *Zechus* (privilege) in life, not only insofar as her own family is concerned, but also, of course, in regard to our Jewish people as a whole, which consists of all the Jewish family units in the fold.

Bearing in mind that these responsibilities and privileges have been bestowed upon Jewish mothers and daughters by HaShem, the Creator of humankind, it is certain that He has provided them with all the necessary capacities to carry out these responsibilities in the fullest measure. Therefore, if a woman encounters some difficulty in carrying out these G-d-given responsibilities, there is a self evident explanation for it: Either the difficulty is more imaginary than real; or, if real, she certainly has the fullest capacity to overcome it. Indeed, if the difficulty is uncommon, it is in itself evidence that HaShem has given her uncommon strength that may require a special challenge to be activated and brought to the surface, in order thereby to augment the arsenal of already revealed capabilities, and thus to spur steady advancement from strength to strength in all matters of Yiddishkeit in the everyday life and conduct.

Thus, as in all matters of Torah and Mitzvos, it is, in the final analysis, a matter of one's own will and determination, especially as one has the assurance of help from On High, if it be necessary.

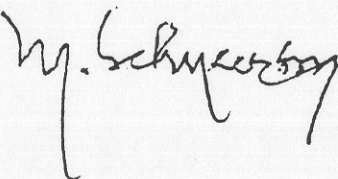
Now that we are in the middle of the Ten Days of Teshuvo — coming from Rosh Hashono, when every Jew reaffirms his and her eager acceptance of the Kingship of the

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Creator as the guiding rule in the everyday, life throughout the year; and preparing for Yom Kippur, the special "One Day" in the year for "Purifying yourselves before HaShem" — it is particularly timely to send this reminder, in keeping with the saying of our Sages, "Give a little (awareness, encouragement, or the like) to the wise, and he/she will become even wiser much more."

May your good resolutions in all above, coupled with the principle that "Action is the essential thing," as mentioned, bring additional Divine blessings in the "Chasimo and Gmar Chasimo Tovo," to each one of you and all yours, and to Klal Yisroel, for a good and sweet year materially and spiritually.

With esteem and blessing,



P.S. Needless to say, though this letter is written in the Ten Days of Teshuvo, its contents and message are timely throughout the year; and, of course, HaShem's blessings are certainly timely throughout the year.

This Letter was enclosed in a letter that the Kolla's parents received with The Rebbes signature