



THE JEWISH WOMAN

Intuition, devotion, and influence: the three defining feminine characteristics that are so important in our lives.

TEACHER'S MANUAL



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Shluchim of the Rebbe to Mumbai India

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In this week's Torah reading, we study the story of the daughters of Tzelafchad, who asked to receive their family's land in Israel (Source 1). The Midrash analyzes this story in an original fashion: women preserve what men destroy. The men donated gold toward the golden calf; the women refused to. The men didn't want to enter the Land of Israel, the women did - and they campaigned for their portion in Israel. (Source 2)

This expresses the deep love the women had for the land of Israel.

When the Torah was given, Moses first addressed the women, and only afterward the men (Source 3). When the mishkan was built, it was the women who donated first. (Source 4)

The Rebbe explains that these three incidents are really parts of one larger picture. 1. The giving of the Torah is emblematic of creation itself. 2. Entering Israel represents the purpose of creation - infusing the material world with sanctity. 3. The mishkan symbolizes the connection between the spiritual and the material. In all of these cases, the women acted appropriately, demonstrating the power of the female intuition.

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When the Jews were in the desert, household chores such as cooking, laundry, and ironing were done miraculously, but in Israel it would become the women's responsibility. In light of that, it would have made sense for the women to object to entering the Land of Israel. However, we see that the women didn't think so and continued to wish to enter Israel right away.

Joke: Two weeks before Passover?

C. Affecting the Entire Family 14

"G-d's eyes are always upon the land," the Torah says about Israel. In the spiritual dimension, Israel means behaving like G-d is watching us every moment, and as a result, we make our environments holy (as Kabbalah teaches, our thoughts fill the four cubits around us [Source 5]). The same way the women excelled in their affection for Israel, they should also excel in creating Israel on the spiritual plane. Women have the power to infuse the home with this feeling of G-d constantly watching us. This affects not only the couple's relationship and the education of their children, but also the husband's behavior at work and in the office.

Story: The afterlife that was sold

The Alter Rebbe explains in Tanya that the most important part of our spiritual lives is to live with the recognition that G-d is always watching us, which in turns causes our behavior to follow appropriately (Source 6). The Rebbe adds that this is really the spiritual dimension of living in Israel. When we act in that manner, we are living in Israel in a spiritual sense.

Story: Make Israel here!

Introduction

The Jews are awaiting the fateful lottery that will determine which tribe settles in which part of the Promised Land. Suddenly, five women approach Moses with a demand: What about us?

A lesson on the power of the Jewish woman.

השיעור לפרשת פנחס

משיחת יום ה' פ' פינחס, י"ב תמוז ה'תשי"ז,
הנחה בלתי מוגה
תורת מנחם כרך כ' עמ' 133 והלאה

לשמיעת השיחה [לחץ כאן](#) או סרוק את הברקוד



A. Your Wife is Always Right

>> The Rebbe

The Women Cherished Israel

Student's
pg. 3

In this week's Torah portion, we read the story of the daughters of Tzelafchad. The sages explain that the women cherished the Holy Land more than the men.

בפרשתנו אנו לומדים את הסיפור על בנות צלפחד¹, ומבואר במדרשי חכמינו ז"ל² שחיבת הארץ הייתה אצל הנשים יותר מאשר אצל האנשים³.

Source 1 Numbers 27:1-7

When the Israelites prepared to enter the Land of Israel, the hottest topic on their minds was real estate. Which portion of the land would each tribe receive? What would be its quality? It was an important issue which would have long-lasting implications for their economic and social status. Moses didn't want to make these decisions on his own, so G-d made the division and distribution.

First the land was split into twelve portions. Then G-d told Moses to hold a lottery. In one box they placed slips of paper with the names of each tribe, and in another box they placed slips of paper with each of the twelve portions. The leader of each tribe approached and pulled out a slip from each box, and the two slips of paper were put together: the selected portion of land went to the selected tribe.

After the tribes received their portions, it was time to divvy up the portions among the individual families. Each family received one portion, which was to be their own—forever.

Until this point, everything was fine and good. But there was one problem: It was in everyone's interest that the tribal portions remain within the possession of the tribe. What if a woman married into another tribe and her children—members of their father's tribe—inherited her portion? To resolve this issue, the Torah says that only sons inherit fathers. The women were not left out; they had the portion of their husbands—in whichever tribe they may belong to.

But then an interesting thing happened. Five women came before Moses, as he sat flanked by Elazar the High Priest, the seventy elders, and the entire People of Israel. These women wanted a different arrangement.

Imagine the scene: three and a half thousand years ago, before Moses and the entire People of Israel,

3. ראה גם שיחת י"ב תמוז דאשתקד סכ"ו (תו"מ ח"י"ז ס"ע 67 ואילך).

1. פרשתנו (פינחס) כו, א ואילך.
2. ראה תנחומא שם ז. במדבר פכ"א, יו"ד. פרש"י שם כו, סד. כו, א.

five women present a different view of things, questioning the entire basis of Moses' decision.

This is how Torah recounts the story:

Student's
pg. 3

The daughters of Tzelafchad, son of Chefer, son of Gilead, son of Makhir, son of Manasseh—of the family of Menasseh, Joseph's son came forward. Their names were Machlah, No'ah, Chaglah, Milkah and Tirtzah.

They stood before Moses, Elazar the priest, the elders, and the entire nation at the entrance of the mishkan (tabernacle) and said:

“Our father died in the desert. He was not among Korach's party who agitated against G-d; he died because of his own sin, and he left no sons.

“Why should our father's name be lost from his family because he did not have a son? Give us a portion of land alongside our father's brothers.”

They were a family of girls. If they wouldn't receive the portion designated for their father, their father's name would be erased. They asked that, considering the circumstances, they be allowed to receive their father's portion.

You can imagine the impact of the question. Acquiescing to their request might overturn the entire system that had been established, and undermine the societal norms of the era. Everybody waited to hear how Moses would react.

To everyone's surprise, Moses said, "It's a great question, and I don't have an answer. Let me ask G-d himself!"

As everybody waited, Moses presented the question to G-d and soon came back with an answer: the women were right. In the case of a family of girls, the daughters would inherit their father's land. Tzelafchad's daughters left happy, and everybody was impressed by their courage.

Read how the story plays out in the Torah:

Student's
pg. 3

Moses brought their case before G-d.

G-d spoke to Moses, saying:

“The daughters of Tzelafchad have a just claim. Give them a hereditary portion of land alongside their father's brothers. Let their father's inheritance pass to them.

וּתְקַרְבֶּנָּה בְּנוֹת צִלְפַּחַד בְּן חֶפֶר
בֶּן גִּלְעָד בֶּן מַכִּיר בֶּן מְנַשֶּׁה
לְמִשְׁפַּחַת מְנַשֶּׁה בֶּן יוֹסֵף וְאֵלֶּה
שְׁמוֹת בְּנֹתָיו מֵחֵלָה נָעִה וְחַגְלָה
וּמִלְכָּה וְתִרְצָחָה. וַתַּעֲמֹדנָה לִפְנֵי
מֹשֶׁה וּלְפָנֵי אֶלְעָזָר הַכֹּהֵן וּלְפָנֵי
הַנְּשִׂאִים וְכָל הָעֵדָה פָּתַח אֱהִל
מוֹעֵד לֵאמֹר. אָבִינוּ מֵת בְּמִדְבָּר
וְהוּא לֹא הָיָה בְּתוֹךְ הָעֵדָה
הַנוֹעֲדִים עַל ה' בַּעֲדַת קָרַח
כִּי בְחַטָּאוֹ מֵת וּבָנִים לֹא הָיוּ
לוֹ. לָמָּה יִגָּרַע שֵׁם אָבִינוּ מִתּוֹךְ
מִשְׁפַּחַתוֹ כִּי אֵין לוֹ בֶּן תָּנֶה לָּנוּ
אֶחָדָה בְּתוֹךְ אֲחֵי אָבִינוּ.

וַיִּקְרַב מֹשֶׁה אֶת מִשְׁפָּטָן
לִפְנֵי ה'. וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה
לֵאמֹר. בְּן בְּנוֹת צִלְפַּחַד
דִּבְרַת נְתֹן תִּתֵּן לָהֶם אֲחֻזָּת
נַחֲלָה בְּתוֹךְ אֲחֵי אָבִיהֶם
וְהֵעֲבַרְתָּ אֶת נַחֲלַת אָבִיהֶן
לָהֶן.

Source 2 Midrash Tanchuma, Pinchas 7

The Midrash gives us an original analysis of the story we just read.

Student's
pg. 4

"The daughters of Tzelafchad came forward." During that generation the women were observant in areas the men breached.

During the sin of the golden calf, Aaron told the people to take their [wives'] earrings and contribute them for the golden calf. The women refused and protested against their husbands. Only the men brought their rings, and the women did not participate in the sin.

The same is true of the spies who spoke ill of the Land of Israel. It was the men who complained against Moses, and the decree of destruction was issued only against the men. The women did not take part in this, and this is why G-d said that "they will perish in the desert, no man will remain." This decree was only on the men, because they didn't want to enter the Land of Israel. The women, by contrast, came forward to ask for a portion in the land, as we see in the case of the daughters of Tzelafchad. This story is related immediately after the passing of Miriam, because it tells of how the men transgressed, while the women acted properly.

Women preserved themselves from what the men damaged. Men gave gold for the golden calf, while the women refrained. Men expressed unwillingness to enter the Land of Israel, while the women did not. On the contrary, they fought for their share of the land.

The special love that women had for the land of Israel was first portrayed when the spies returned with a bleak report, saying that it was impossible to conquer the land. The Israelites burst into tears and refused to continue to the land. This was a response only from the men... The women stood firm in their faith to continue and enter the land. Additionally, the daughters of Tzelafchad took a step forward and fought for their portion in the land. This exemplifies their true desire to enter the land.

וּתְקַרְבְּנָה בְּנוֹת צִלְפָּחָד. אוֹתוֹ הַדּוֹר
הַנָּשִׁים הָיוּ גּוֹדְרוֹת מֵהַשְּׂאֲנָשִׁים
פּוֹרְצִין.

שָׁכַן אֶת מוֹצֵא שְׂאֵמֶר לָהֶם אֶהְרֶן,
פָּרְקוּ נְזָמֵי הַזָּהָב (שְׁמוֹת לֵב, ב),
וְלֹא רָצוּ הַנָּשִׁים וּמַחוּ בְּכַעֲלֵיהֶן,
שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וַיִּתְּפְּרוּ כָּל הָעָם וְגו' (שֵׁם פֶּסוּק ג), וְהַנָּשִׁים לֹא נִשְׁתַּתְּפוּ
בְּמַעֲשֵׂה הָעֵגֶל.

וְכֵן בְּמִרְגָּלִים שֶׁהוֹצִיאוּ דָבָה,
וַיִּשְׁוּבוּ וַיִּלְיֵנוּ עָלָיו (בַּמִּדְבָּר יד, לו).
וְעָלִייהֶם נִגְזְרָה גְזֵרָה, שֶׁאֲמָרוּ, לֹא
נוֹכַל לְעֲלוֹת אֶל הָעָם (שֵׁם יג, לא).
אֲבָל הַנָּשִׁים לֹא הָיוּ עִמָּהֶם בְּעֵצָה,
שֶׁהָרִי כְּתִיב לְמַעַלְהָ מִן הָעֵנָן, כִּי
אָמַר ה' לָהֶם מוֹת יָמוּתוּ בַּמִּדְבָּר
וְלֹא נוֹתֵר מֵהֶם אִישׁ וְגו' (שֵׁם כו,
סה), אִישׁ וְלֹא אִשָּׁה, עַל מַה שֶּׁלֹּא
רָצוּ לְהַכְנִיס לְאֶרֶץ. אֲבָל הַנָּשִׁים,
קָרְבוּ עִצְמוֹן לְבַקֵּשׁ נַחֲלָה. וַתְּקַרְבְּנָה
בְּנוֹת צִלְפָּחָד. וּלְכֹךָ נִכְתְּבָה פְּרֻשָּׁה
זוֹ סְמוּךְ לְמִיתַת מֵרִים, שֶׁמִּשָּׁם
פָּרְצוּ הַנָּשִׁים וְגִדְרוּ הַנָּשִׁים.

>> The Rebbe

Ladies First At The Giving Of The Torah

Student's
pg. 4

We also find women coming before the men at the giving of the Torah. The verse says "this is what you should say to the house of Jacob, and tell the sons of Israel." "The house of Jacob" refers to the women, and the "sons of Israel" refers to the men.

וכמו כן מצינו קדימת הנשים
לאנשים במתן תורה - כמו
שכתוב "כה תאמר לבית יעקב
(אלו הנשים, ואחר כך) ותגיד
לבני ישראל".

Source 3 Exodus 19:3

Student's
pg. 5

Moses went up to G-d, and G-d called to him from the mountain and said, "This is what you should say to the house of Jacob, and tell the sons of Israel."

וּמֹשֶׁה עָלָה אֶל הָאֱלֹקִים וַיִּקְרָא
אֵלָיו ה' מִן הַהָר לֵאמֹר כֹּה תֹאמַר
לְבֵית יַעֲקֹב וְתִגִּיד לְבָנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל.

Shemot Rabbah 28:2

Student's
pg. 5

"This is what you should say to the house of Jacob":
These are the women. "Tell the sons of Israel":
These are the men.

"כֹּה תֹאמַר לְבֵית יַעֲקֹב" אֵלֶּי
הַנָּשִׁים... "וְתִגִּיד לְבָנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל"
אֵלֶּי הָאָנָּשִׁים.

When G-d offered the Torah to the Jewish people He sent Moses and said to him, "First speak to the women and present the Torah to them. And after they express their agreement, then speak to the men."

Why? The Midrash tells us that during the creation of the world, G-d gave the commandment not to eat from the Tree of Knowledge to the man (Adam) and relied on him to convey the commandment to his wife. We all know what occurred afterward: Adam decided to tell Eve that not only is it forbidden to eat from the tree, but it is also forbidden to even touch it. The serpent then came and pushed her, causing her to touch the tree. When nothing happened to her, this served as "proof" that all the warnings were of no consequence, and thus convinced her to go ahead and eat from it as well. In this way, Eve, as described in the Torah, convinced Adam to eat from the tree as well. G-d concluded from this saga that next time He would speak to the women first. And indeed, that is what He did.

>> The Rebbe

Ladies First At The Mishkan Construction

Student's
pg. 5

We find the same phenomenon during the construction of the mishkan, about which the verse says "make a temple for me and I will dwell in their midst." When relating the process of the mishkan's construction, the verse says "the men came with the women," i.e., following them. The mishkan's purpose as the site for G-d's presence to dwell wasn't just part of the Divine service in the desert period, it continued after settling in the Land of Israel. Here too we find that the women cherished the mishkan more than the men.

וכן בעשיית המשכן - עליו נאמר⁵ "ועשו לי מקדש ושכנתי בתוכם", על ידי הלוחות שבארון⁶ כמו שכתוב⁷ "ויבואו האנשים על הנשים", וגם בענין זה מצינו מעלת הנשים, שאצלן היתה חיבת המשכן יותר מאשר אצל האנשים.

Source 4 Exodus 35:22

Student's
pg. 5

The men came with the women, all who had a willing heart brought bracelets, earrings, rings, and necklaces, all kinds of gold jewelry, and every man who presented a waving of gold to G-d.

וַיָּבֹאוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים עַל הַנָּשִׁים כֹּל נָדִיב לֵב הֵבִיאוּ חָז וְנָזָם וְטַבַּעַת וְכוּמָז כָּל כְּלֵי זָהָב וְכָל אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הֵנִיף תְּנוּפֶת זָהָב לַה'.

Student's
pg. 5

Ramban, ad loc.

The reason the men followed the women was because women are more readily able to donate jewelry, and they all had jewelry. They immediately removed their jewelry and were first to bring it. The men who had jewelry came after them to bring it. "Following the women" indicates that the women were first, and the men followed their example.

וְטַעַם וַיָּבֹאוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים עַל הַנָּשִׁים כַּעֲבוּר כִּי הַנְּדָכָה בְּתַכְשִׁיטֵינָּהּ הִיא מְצוּיָה אֶצְל הַנָּשִׁים יוֹתֵר, וְכֵלָן הָיוּ לָהֶן, וּפְרָקוּ נְזָמֵיהֶן וְטַבַּעוֹתֵיהֶן מִיָּד, וּבָאוּ תַחֲלָה, וְהָאֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר נִמְצְאוּ לָהֶם הֵבִיאוּ עִמָּהֶם, כִּי טַעַם עַל הַנָּשִׁים שֶׁהֵן הָיוּ שָׁם בְּרֵאשׁוֹנָה וְהָאֲנָשִׁים נִטְפְּלוּ לָהֶן.

It is worthy to note that when it came to giving jewelry for the golden calf, the women refused. However, when it came to giving jewelry for the Tabernacle, the women eagerly stepped forward first. We see that the women had a highly developed spiritual intuition!

7. ויקהל לה, כב ובפרשי" ורמב"ן.

5. תרומה כה, ח.
6. ראה רמב"ן ר"פ תרומה.

>> The Rebbe

Three Critical Junctions

The three instances in which we witnessed the spiritual strength of women were not just random events. These were significant and critical junctions in the history of the people of Israel, and they reflect a basic rule.

Student's These three matters—the giving of the
pg. 6 Torah, the construction of the mishkan, and the entry to the Land of Israel—are interrelated, and are parts of a single process.

שלושה ענינים אלו - מתן תורה, עשיית המשכן, וכניסה לארץ ישראל - קשורים זה בזה, והם המשך אחד:

Student's 1. The giving of the Torah - starting point

pg. 6

The starting point of everything is the giving of the Torah. The sages say that "G-d looked into the Torah and created the world," so acceptance of the Torah that preceded creation and nature is the starting point.

התחלת כל הדברים היא - מתן-תורה, כמאמר⁸ "אסתכל באורייתא וברא עלמא", הרי שהתחלת כל הדברים היא קבלת התורה שקדמה לעולם ולטבע.

2. The entry into the land of Israel symbolizes the ultimate goal - the transformation of the world into a dwelling place for G-d

Student's

pg. 6

The ultimate goal is to make this lowly realm a dwelling for G-d. This is represented by the entry to the Holy Land where G-d's eyes constantly focus. After entering Israel a natural process began, and the Jewish people had to engage in regular mundane labor, but G-d's presence was to be felt in everything - holiness is drawn into the lowly physical realm. Prior to the redemption, this combination of the spiritual and the physical is unique to the Land of Israel, and after the redemption "the Land of Israel will expand all over the world."

תכלית כל הדברים היא - לעשות לו יתברך דירה בתחתונים, והוא ענין הכניסה ל"ארץ אשר גו' עיני ה' אלקיך בה", עם היות שבארץ ישראל התחיל סדר הטבע, שלושים ותשע המלאכות (החורש וכו'), עובדין דחול, מכל מקום, הרי בכל הענינים צריך להיות נרגש אלקות, "תמיד עיני ה' אלוקיך בה", שהוא ענין המשכת הקדושה בארץ הגשמית הלזו התחתונה (אשר, קודם הגאולה העתידה הרי זה ענינה של ארץ ישראל, ולעתיד לבוא יהיה כן בכל הארצות, כמאמר רבותינו ז"ל⁹ "עתידה ארץ ישראל שתפשט בכל הארצות").

9. ראה ספרי דברים בתחלתו. פס"ד פ' שבת ור"ח. יל"ש ישע"י רמז תקג.

8. זח"ב קסא, רע"ב.

3. The mishkan symbolizes the connection between the spiritual and the physical. The mishkan was a physical structure in this world, yet it was also the dwelling place of the Divine Presence.

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The transition point between the Torah and the Land of Israel, which serves as a conduit for bringing Torah into the mundane world, is the mishkan, built from gold, silver, and copper.

והממוצע בין התורה וארץ ישראל
(שעל ידו נמשכת התורה בעניני
העולם) הוא בנין המשכן מזהב, כסף
ונחושת כו'.

In these three critical junctions, it was the women who did the right thing.

When G-d wanted to give the Torah - which is the foundation of Judaism and the entire world - He instructed Moses to first speak with the women. When it came to the construction of the Tabernacle, which was meant to symbolize the connection between the physical and the spiritual, it was the women who came forward to contribute first. And when it came to entering the land of Israel, which symbolizes the transformation of the world into a good place that is a dwelling for G-d, the women were not swayed by the stories of the spies. They continued to believe in entering the land.

Student's
pg. 7

In all these three matters, women had a special merit and unique abilities, and they sustained them for the men as well. As we are told regarding the starting point of the giving of the Torah, that starting with "the house of Jacob" sustains the "sons of Israel" as well.

ובכל שלושת דברים הללו מצינו
שהייתה לנשים זכות מיוחדת וכוחות
מיוחדים, עד כדי כך, שעל ידם דווקא
הוא קיום כל הענינים גם לאנשים, כמו
שכתוב גבי מתן תורה (התחלת כל
הדברים וקיומם) שעל ידי שהקדים
תחלה את "בית יעקב", נעשה הקיום
גם ב"בני ישראל"¹⁰.

10. שמור"ר במקומו, פכ"ח, ב.

B. Ready to Pay a Price

Until now we have learned about the spiritual intuition of women that helped them make the right choices at critical junctures in Jewish history. Now the Rebbe highlights the costs they were willing to bear for these choices.

>> The Rebbe

Entering The Land Inconvenienced The Women

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This point is highlighted with the entry to Israel. Entering Israel was a great inconvenience for the women in particular, a far harder existence than they had in the desert. The vast majority of a woman's chores weren't necessary in the desert. Preparing food wasn't necessary because manna came from heaven and Miriam's well provided water. Clothing grew together with the people, and the clouds of glory cleaned them. During the time in the desert the women didn't have to exert themselves at all for these chores, and they were able to dedicate all of their time to educating their children.

ובענין זה יש הדגשה יתירה בנוגע לכניסה לארץ ישראל: בכניסה לארץ ישראל התחילה טירחה יתירה אצל הנשים במיוחד, שלא בערך לגבי היותם במדבר - הרי רוב המלאכות, רובן ככולן לא היו במדבר; הכנת המזון - הרי במדבר ירד ה"מזן", ומים מבארה של מרים, כך, שהמזון היה מן המוכן. בנוגע ללבושים - הרי במדבר היו הלבושים גדלים עמהם, וענני הכבוד היו מרחצים אותם¹¹. ונמצא, שבהיותן במדבר, לא היתה לנשים טירחה במלאכות אלו, וכל עיסוקן היה בחינוך הבנים והבנות.

During those times, household tasks such as cooking, laundry, and ironing were primarily the responsibility of women. In the desert, however, all these tasks were miraculously taken care of. Food fell from the sky, water came from the well, and the clouds took care of laundering and cleaning the garments, allowing the women of Israel to focus on educating their sons and daughters. However, when the Israelites entered the land, this respite ended, and they had to work hard! Accordingly, we would expect to hear the women objecting the loudest to entering the land... or at least joining the general objection of the men. In fact, we see that women did not pay any attention to this and constantly sought and desired to enter the land immediately.

As a result, logically speaking the women should not have wanted to enter Israel. Nevertheless, they cherished the land. Unlike the spies who claimed that "it is a land that consumes its inhabitants," the women accepted all the additional work Israel would demand from them, with the hope of transforming the Land of Canaan to the Land of Israel, a holy land. This would be a complete transformation, from the abominations of the Land of Canaan to the greatest possible holiness that can manifest in a physical place—the Land of Israel.

וכיון שכן, הרי, על פי שכל, לא היו הנשים צריכות לרצות להיכנס לארץ ישראל. ואף על פי כן, היתה אצלן חיבת הארץ - היפך הנהגת המרגלים שלא רצו להיכנס לארץ ישראל, באמרם שהיא "ארץ אוכלת יושביה"¹² - שהסכימו לקבל על עצמן את כל המלאכות הנוספות, מתוך תקווה, אשר, בכניסתן לשם, יעשו מ"ארץ כנען" "ארץ ישראל", ארץ קדושה, דהיינו, מן הקצה אל הקצה: מהתועבות של מעשה ארץ כנען¹³, עד לתכלית הקדושה שיכולה להיות בארץ הגשמית, שזוהי ארץ ישראל.

A Joke: Two weeks before Passover?

A story is told about a Jewish man who served for many years in the royal palace. The king loved him, advanced him, and deepened their relationship year after year. One day, the king wanted to appoint the Jew as a minister, but there was one minor problem: a Jew could not be a minister. The king suggested that the Jew and his family undergo an expedited religious conversion ceremony, and thus the problem would be solved.

The Jew in our story was of weak character, and after consulting with his wife, he agreed. He renounced his faith and became a respected minister in the government. For a few months, they lived as "secret" Christians, but his wife was depressed. She missed the experience of the synagogue, the warmth of the community, and so on. She kept telling her husband that she wanted to return to Judaism. After a few months, he too was convinced, and he fell into despair as well.

When the king saw this, he gave him special permission to return to his Jewish faith.

The Jew returned home and happily said to his wife, "Mazal Tov, Gitel, we are going back to being Jews!" Suddenly, he noticed her expression change, she turned pale."What happened?" he asked. "You've been asking for this all the time!" His wife replied, "Yes, that's true. But not two weeks before Passover!"

*

In our story, the Jewish women did not think at all about the difficulties that would arise from entering the land. They simply continued to desire and pray for entry into the land.

It is worth mentioning that even in the second example we learned, regarding the contributions to the Tabernacle, the enthusiastic women contributed their own jewelry! They didn't express their excitement at someone else's expense.

Often, people like to observe a mitzvah in the most beautiful way, but sometimes it comes at the expense of someone else. The husband adopts extra stringencies in the observance of the Pesach laws and tells his wife to prepare all the special food herself. A woman may go to extra lengths in performing the commandment of assisting the needy, but leaves her children alone at home without care and maternal warmth. And so on.

In the examples we learned, the Jewish women demonstrated that not only do they have the holy intuition to make the right decisions, but they also did so at their own expense and were willing to sacrifice for it.

C. Influencing the Entire Family

>> The Rebbe

The Land Of Israel In The Spiritual Sense

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pg. 9

The story of the daughters of Tzelafchad and the love they showed for the Land of Israel is related in the Torah in order to serve as a guide for the Jewish women of all subsequent generations.

We mentioned earlier that the spiritual concept of the Land of Israel is relevant in every time and place. The Land of Israel is "the land G-d's eyes are constantly on, from the beginning of the year to the end of the year." In the spiritual sense, this means conducting ourselves such that our immediate surroundings are constantly enveloped in holiness, just like G-d's eyes are constantly on His land. This is something we have all been given the ability to achieve. No one can stand in our way in this regard, it depends exclusively on our free choice.

וענין זה, שבנות צלפחד חיבבו את הארץ, נכתב בתורה שבכתב, בתור הוראת-דרך לנשי ובנות ישראל בכל הדורות הבאים.

ובהקדם המוזכר לעיל¹⁴ שהענין של ארץ ישראל ברוחניות ישנו בכל זמן ובכל מקום: ארץ ישראל היא "ארץ אשר גו' תמיד עיני ה' אלקיך בה מרשית השנה ועד אחרית שנה"¹⁵. וענינה ברוחניות - שעבודת האדם היא באופן שמעמיד את עצמו במעמד ומצב שבארבע אמותיו תהיה השראת הקדושה באופן תמידי, על דרך ש"תמיד עיני ה' אלקיך בה מרשית השנה ועד אחרית שנה", והרי ענין זה ניתן ברשותו ובכחו של כל אחד, מבלי שאף אחד יוכל להיות בעל הבית עליו, ותלוי לגמרי בבחירתו החפשית של כל אחד ואחת.

Regarding the Land of Israel the Torah writes that "G-d's eyes are constantly on it." What is the spiritual meaning of this? It means that a person should conduct themselves in a manner that reflects the idea that G-d is constantly watching over them. As a result, their surroundings will be fully permeated with holiness.

What does it mean that their surroundings will be fully permeated with holiness?

According to Kabbalah, it is explained that a person's thoughts fill the atmosphere in the four amos (cubits) around them.

Source 5 Tanya, Igeret Hakodesh ch. 27

Student's
pg. 9

The sphere of the Garden of Eden extends itself around every person. All of a person's positive thoughts and words of Torah and Divine service are recorded in this sphere. (And likewise to the contrary, G-d forbid. Negative thoughts and words are recorded in the sphere of Gehinom, which extends around every person.)

וְכֵן כָּתוּב בְּסֵפֶר עֲשָׂרָה מְאֻמְרוֹת,
שְׂאוּר גֵּן עֵדֶן מִתְפַּשֵּׁט סְבִיב
כָּל אָדָם, וְנִרְשָׁמִים בְּאֵוִיר זֶה
כָּל מַחֲשַׁבוֹתָיו וְדַבָּרָיו הַטּוֹבִים
בְּתוֹרָה וְעִבּוּדַת ה' (וְכֵן לְהִיפֹךְ חֵס
וְשְׁלוֹם נִרְשָׁמִים בְּאֵוִיר הַמִּתְפַּשֵּׁט
מִגֵּיהֶנָם סְבִיב כָּל אָדָם).

We have learned, therefore, that the commandment of "the Land of Israel" in the spiritual sense means creating a reality in which a person behaves with the feeling that G-d is watching them at every moment, thus creating around them a holy atmosphere of the Land of Israel. And since in the original entrance to the Land of Israel, women shone and demonstrated a deeper love for the land than men, they can conduct themselves in a similar manner also in the creation of the spiritual space of the Land of Israel.

A Holy Atmosphere At Home

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pg. 10

Jewish women and girls have great responsibilities, which are actually privileges that empower them. These responsibilities are not limited to their relationship with their husbands and educating children, but extend even to their husbands' conduct outside of the house. He knows that when he comes home his wife will ask him about his day. When she hears that his conduct was in accordance with Torah wisdom she will be pleased, and if she hears about a failure in a specific area she will be disappointed. This influences him to maintain the highest level of conduct while he is in his office and occupied with his work affairs.

עַל נְשֵׁי וּבְנוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל מוֹטֶלֶת אַחֲרֵי, וְנִיתְנָה לָהֶם הַזְכוּת וְהַכּוּחַ, לֹא רַק בְּעִנְיָנִים הַקְּשׁוּרִים עִם חֲבִיבוֹת כּו', וְלֹא רַק בְּעִנְיָנִים הַקְּשׁוּרִים עִם חִינוּךְ הַבָּנִים וְהַבְּנוֹת, אֲלֵא גַם בְּנוֹגַע לְכַלְלֹת הַנְּהַגַת הַבַּיִת, וְאִפִּילוּ בְּנוֹגַע לְהַנְהִיגַת הַבַּעַל גַּם כֹּאשֶׁר יוֹצֵא מִחוּץ לְבַיְתוֹ, שְׂכַן, בִּידְעוֹ שֶׁבִּשְׂבוּבוֹ לְבַיְתוֹ יִשְׁאַלְוֵהוּ כִּיצַד הַתְּנַהֵג בְּעִנְיָנָיו בַּחוּץ, וְכֹאשֶׁר יִתְבַּרֵר שֶׁהַנְּהִיגָתוֹ הִיָּתְהָ עַל פִּי חֻכְמַת הַתּוֹרָה אֲזִי יִסְתַּכְּלוּ עֲלָיו "בְּעֵין יָפֵה", שֶׁהַתְּנַהֵג כִּרְאוּי לִיהוּדֵי-תּוֹרֵנִי, וְאִם יִתְבַּרֵר שֶׁנִּכְשַׁל בְּעִנְיָן מִסּוּמִים שֶׁהֵיָה צָרִיךְ לְהַתְּנַהֵג בְּאוֹפֵן אַחֵר, הֲרִי זֶה יִגְרוּם אֵי-שְׁבִיעוֹת-רִצּוֹן - הֲרִי זֶה מִשְׁפִּיעַ עֲלָיו לְהַתְּנַהֵג כְּדַבְעֵי גַם בְּהִיּוֹתוֹ בְּמִשְׁרָדוֹ אוֹ בְּעִבּוּדָתוֹ וּבְמִלְאָכָתוֹ.

The reality is that the woman is the one who sets the atmosphere in the home. The man can do many things outside the home, but it won't have any great effect. The atmosphere and tone in the home are determined by the woman.

Women are given the power and privilege to shape an atmosphere in the home that will not only affect the marital relationship and the upbringing of children, but also the man's conduct in the office and at work. He knows that when he comes back and says that he fulfilled a commandment or did a good deed for another person, his wife will be pleased with him, and the reverse will cause an adverse reaction.

Story: Selling Afterlife

Once upon a time, there was a Jewish man named Rabbi Shammai. He was a diligent student of Torah and would often travel to his teacher to hear words of wisdom. One day, his wife asked him to seek a blessing from his teacher for them to find a suitable match for their daughter who was of marriageable age.

"Here is a gold coin," said Rabbi Shammai's teacher, grasping his hand. "Go home, and if you come across something to buy on your way, don't miss the opportunity. Go home and be successful."

As Rabbi Shammai journeyed back home, he passed through a town where a grand fair was taking place. Farmers and merchants from the surrounding areas had gathered there to trade, buy, and sell. However, Rabbi Shammai did not go to the market. Instead, he headed straight to the study hall, opened a Talmud, and began studying aloud. He hoped that one of the traveling merchants would enter the study hall, notice him, and take him along.

Suddenly, the door opened and two men, clearly recognizable as Jewish merchants attending the fair, entered. They sat at a table and began to chat about the day's successes at the markets. In high spirits, their gaze shifted to the man with the Talmud.

"Tell us, my friend," one of the businessmen teasingly asked him. "You certainly came for the fair. What industry are you in? Let's talk business."

"I buy whatever they're selling," said Rabbi Shammai.

The merchant laughed heartily, and continuing his little game, asking if he would buy his portion in the afterlife. "How much will you give me for my afterlife?" he asked patronizingly.

Rabbi Shammai remembered his teacher's instruction to buy whatever came his way. "I'll give you as much as I have on me," he replied, showing the merchant the gold coin his teacher had given him.

The merchants rolled with laughter. This was all the money that this fellow who claimed to be buying everything had. "Fine, give me the coin and it's a deal," the merchant told Rabbi Shammai.

The merchants were enjoying their game even more now, and signed a contract. Laughing at the gullible Talmud scholar, they left the synagogue. Rabbi Shammai continued his studies.

A fool usually can't keep their mouth shut and the merchant who had sold his afterlife went to the town center bragging to everyone how clever he was. Think about it: He had received a gold coin in exchange for nothing!

When his wife found out about his clever antics, she was not happy. She was an upstanding Jew and she knew that you don't play games with the afterlife; it isn't something you sell. Crying, she told her husband that he wouldn't be coming into the house until he bought back his afterlife. "You were never a tzaddik, but now whatever afterlife you did have, you sold!" she yelled at him.

Together, they went to the synagogue and found the Jew who'd bought the afterlife and asked him to sell it back to the merchant.

"Look sir," the merchant answered. "I just returned from my teacher after telling him that I need to marry off my daughter. He gave me this coin and told me to buy the first item that comes my way. I cannot do anything until I marry her off."

The merchant's wife saw that nothing would change his mind. She told her husband to take a pen and paper and calculate how much it would cost to marry off a daughter. Clothing, furniture, a home, everything. When the calculation was done, the merchant took a large sum of money and handed it to Rabbi Shammai, and Rabbi Shammai returned the contract.

"I am returning to you more than what you gave me," Rabbi Shammai said, "because you now also gained the mitzvah of helping a bride get married."

"If so, I got a great deal," the merchant said with satisfaction, as they shook hands and parted ways.

Rabbi Shammai went home with joy, thanking G-d for the money that had come his way. Not long after, Rabbi Shammai and his wife were escorting their daughter to her chuppah.

The merchant, who had earlier sold his afterlife in the blink of an eye, was completely changed by this story. He felt fortunate that he was able to help marry someone off, and regretted his foolishness in selling his afterlife. He repented and became a truly new person.

He gave charity generously to various causes and did everything to ensure his afterlife would be worth more than a single gold coin.

>> The Rebbe

In G-d's Presence

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The practical lesson every woman should derive from this for her time and place is that the conduct of "G-d's eyes are constantly on it" (the Land of Israel, for which women displayed an affinity) should be apparent in everything she does. This should be "constant," not only on Shabbat and festivals, but even during the weekdays, and even in the mundane matters. G-d's presence should be felt, as the Alter Rebbe writes in Tanya, "And, behold, G-d stands over him and He looks at him, searching his reins and heart to see if he is serving Him properly."

Source 6 Tanya, ch. 41

Student's
pg. 11

One must constantly bear in mind the beginning of Divine service, its core and its root....

To at least contemplate the greatness of the Infinite G-d, and on His Kingship, which extends to all worlds, both the higher and lower realms....

"Behold, G-d stands over him," and "The whole world is full of His glory," and He looks at him, searching his reins and heart to see if he is serving Him properly. Therefore he must serve in His presence with awe and fear, like a person standing before a king.

One must meditate profoundly and at length on this thought, each person according to their mental capacity and according to the time available to him, before he occupies himself with Torah or observance of a mitzvah, such as prior to putting on a tallit or tefillin.

The Alter Rebbe explains in the Tanya what the essence and primary focus of Divine service is. A person needs to live with the feeling that G-d is constantly watching over them, and thus their conduct will naturally align accordingly.

ונקודת ההוראה שכל אשה צריכה להביא אל הפועל במקומה ובזמנה, בכל עניינה צריכה להיות נרגשת החיבה להנהגה של "עיני ה' אלקיך בה", ובאופן של "תמיד", היינו, לא רק בשבת ויום טוב, אלא גם בימות החול ובענייני חול יורגש שכאן נצב הקב"ה, כמו שכתוב בתניא פרק מ"א: "והנה ה' נצב עליו... ומביט עליו ובוחר כליות ולב אם עובדו כראוי".

ברם, צריך להיות לזכרון תמיד ראשית העבודה ועיקרה ושרשה. והוא... להתבונן במחשבתו על כל פנים גדולת אין-סוף פרוץ-הוא, ומלכותו אשר היא "מלכות כל עולמים" – עליונים ותחתונים...

והנה ה' נצב עליו, ו"מלא כל הארץ כבודו", ומביט עליו, ובוחר כליות ולב אם עובדו כראוי. ועל פן צריך לעבוד לפניו באימה וביראה, כעומד לפני המלך.

ויעמיק במחשבה זו ויאריך בה כפי יכולת השגת מוחו ומחשבתו, וכפי הפנאי שלו, לפני עסק התורה, או המצוה, כמו לפני לבישת טלית ותפילין.

The Rebbe elucidates that this is, in fact, the spiritual concept of living in the Land of Israel - "G-d's eyes are on it." When a person lives in a way that G-d is constantly observing them, they are spiritually living in the Land of Israel.

In relation to our topic, the daughters of Tzelafchad who had a special love for the land, as well as the other women in the desert who did not fall under the negative influence of the spies and continued to express their desire to enter the land, serve as an instruction for women in all times.

Women should be the ones who cultivate a spiritual love for the land, so that their lives, their homes, and even their husbands live with the feeling that "G-d's eyes are on it," that G-d is watching over them.

In this way, they influence their entire family to live good and fulfilled lives.

>> The Rebbe

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When a woman shows her affection for conduct in accordance with "G-d's eyes are constantly on it" in every detail and action, even on weekdays and with mundane matters, this transforms the entire house—together with the husband, even when he is away from home—into a dwelling place for G-d.

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When G-d is present with us we have no fear, "I don't fear evil because You are with me." All obstacles disappear. G-d gives us everything we need, "He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside calm waters, he refreshes my soul . . . my cup overflows." We receive everything not just in a basically amenable manner, but with calm and dignity. This is "a good and expansive land" in Divine service, and it leads to goodness and expansiveness in all material matters, children, health, and livelihood - all in abundance.

וכאשר תהיה אצל האשה חיבה גלויה להנהגה באופן ש"תמיד עיני ה' אלקיך בה", בכל ענין פרטי ופעולה פרטית, אפילו בימות החול ובעיניני הרשות - הרי זה מעמיד את הבית כולו, יחד עם הבעל, גם בהיותו מחוץ לביתו, באופן שתהיה שם דירה לו יתברך, המשכת אלקות.

וכאשר נמצאים יחד עם הקב"ה - אזי "ה' לי לא אירא"¹⁶, "לא אירא רע כי אתה עמדי"¹⁷, היינו, שמתבטלים כל המניעות והעיכובים, ויתירה מזה, שהקב"ה נותן את כל המצטרך באופן ש"בנאות דשא ירביצני על מי מנוחות ינהלני גו' כוסי רויה"¹⁸, לא רק באופן של כשרות, אלא גם באופן של מנוחה וכבוד, ובפשטות - "ארץ טובה ורחבה" בעבודה הרוחנית, שעל ידי זה נמשך טוב והרחבה בכל הענינים הגשמיים, בבני חיי ומזוני רויחא.

Story: "Make this place into the Land of Israel"

A letter of the Rebbe Rayatz, dated 20 Av 5685

Igrot Kodesh, Rebbe Rayatz, vol. 1, p. 485

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I received your letter regarding your longing to travel to the Land of Israel - may it be speedily rebuilt - and your reasons for this. I have a different opinion about this, an opinion that is rooted in the great tree from which we all draw life...

In the year 5717, one of the great Chasidim asked the Tzemach Tzedek, the third Chabad Rebbe, about the matter of traveling to the Land of Israel - may it be speedily rebuilt. The questioner explained that he possessed a strong desire to diligently study Torah and worship G-d there.

The Tzemach Tzedek answered him . . . "We need to make the Land of Israel here - Make the place you are living in the Land of Israel."

The time has come that everyone understands and sees what is before them. We should not look right or left, and we should not seek other places. Here we are, and here we must illuminate with the light of Torah through the pathways of Divine worship. The time has come to know that the purpose of our lives is in helping our brethren, by awakening their hearts to everything that is good and beneficial.

משיחת יום ה' פ' פינחס, י"ב תמוז ה'תשי"ז,

הנחה בלתי מוגה

תורת מנחם כרך כ' עמ' 133 והלאה