



פרשת צבאים-זילך

ROSH HASHANA: A CELEBRATION OF JEWISH WOMEN

Sicha to Jewish Women – 27 Elul, 5740-1980

The mood and the atmosphere of the home are dependent on the woman. She is called *Akeret HaBayit*, the main pillar of the home. It is dependant upon her to make the home a “small sanctuary” –a house about which G-d says, “I will dwell within them.” It is a home where the Divine Presence can rest throughout, since it can be found in the hearts of all of the home’s inhabitants.

Regarding Rosh Hashanah, too, we highlight the fundamentals that must be accomplished by the women:

In the first verse of the Torah reading for the first day of Rosh Hashanah, we read: “And G-d remembered Sarah.” The very first Jewish woman, our Matriarch Sarah, had been blessed by G-d, and He later fulfilled His promise –she bore a child who was the continuity of the Patriarchs and of the entire Jewish nation, for all of eternity.

The same is true in the reading of the second day. We read about the Binding of Yitzchak. The Torah relates: How did Yitzchak grow up to be the person that he did? What gave him the strength to sacrifice himself for Judaism –which not only did not hurt him at all, Heaven forbid, but rather he was blessed with “I will greatly increase your descendants;” and his conduct caused the creation of the Jewish People?

The Torah says this was because Sarah dedicated herself to Yitzchak’s education even more than Avraham did.

Obviously, Avraham made sacrifices for the education of his only son. Yet, the Torah tells us that Sarah accomplished even more than he did. She guarded Yitzchak –although he was the only Jewish child in the generation– so that he not be involved with the “gentile-ness” of other children, and not get involved with “gentile-ness” in general.

Sarah accomplished this through her self sacrifice: Although it drew attention to herself, and she sometimes had to give up on the Mitzvah of inviting guests –by nature she performed kind deeds, doing favors for the Arabs and others around her.

Yet, when it came to raising a Jewish child, she did not even consider her feelings.

The desire to help other people is something that the Torah encourages, in addition to being the nature of every mother, surely of a Jewish mother, and certainly a Jewish mother going the ways of Sarah our Matriarch.

When it comes to the upbringing of Jewish children, however, she is willing to completely overlook the fact that she is raising him “alone.” He is a Jewish child, and is not influenced by



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living in a neighborhood or a city where there are few Jewish children; "You are the fewest amongst the nations," there are many more non-Jewish children and non-Jewish influences.

Yet, a Jewish mother does all she can, striving to provide for her child – whether a boy or a girl – a complete Jewish upbringing, in the same manner exhibited by Sarah, Rivkah, Rachel and Leah, our holy Matriarchs.

And then the child grows with G-d's blessing: "I will greatly increase your descendants," both physically and spiritually.

The child influences his entire surrounding, bringing great *nachas* – true and tangible *nachas* – to the mother who raised him, as well as to his father and his family and to the entire Jewish nation.

The same was later true of Chana the Prophetess as well. She was the first prophetess to foretell Moshiach's arrival. She said that he would come with strength, "and exalt the horn of His anointed" with an uplifted hand, for each and every Jew will leave exile proudly, "with an upright posture"; not afraid of anything, since G-d is with him and very soon He will take us out of exile with Moshiach.

Chana foretold all of this in her famous prophecy, which we read as the *Haftorah* on the first day of Rosh Hashanah.

How did Chana achieve such greatness? For she was remembered by G-d on Rosh Hashanah. Her bearing of a child was connected with Rosh Hashanah, when every Jew accepts G-d as "King of Israel."

