



"THE JEWISH WOMAN"

Part One of Three: The Woman's Special Mitzvot

Farbrenge – 6 Tishrei, 5745-1984

In honor of 22 Shevat, the Yahrzeit of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka, the Rebbe's wife.

This gathering commemorates the *Yahrzeit* of a Jewish woman. We should begin by finding a lesson on issues where women stand out relative to men.

The lesson is evident, in the commandments given to women —though they're mandatory, by Torah and by logic, to both men and women: The three commandments — three pillars of the Jewish home, family purity, Kosher food and drink, and lighting the Shabbos and festival candles.

Torah obligates men and women equally in each of these Mitzvot, yet Torah also rules in the Oral Law and in the Code of Jewish Law, that although men and women are equally obligated in these three Mitzvot, nevertheless, since the home is the woman's domain, the commandment of lighting Shabbos candles was given to her. The Talmud says, "The man brings home wheat but what can he do with it?" It is processed into bread by his helpmate.

So the laws Kosher food and drink were given to women. Likewise the laws of family purity; husband and wife are equally obligated and rewarded, and, Heaven forbid, equally responsible. But the attention to detail, the care and the implementation, depends on the woman. In this issue, her word carries extraordinary credibility. In other Torah issues, we are hesitant to rely on only one witness.

Here, one woman's word is trusted in all three Mitzvot!

It is easily reasoned from this, that by resolving to increase the meticulous observance of these three commandments —the fulfillment of which, according to Torah, is through Jewish women and girls— the added observance of these Mitzvot by women and girls will encourage Jewish men and boys to grow in the observance of their commandments, and in the commandments common to men and women, since according to Torah they are both equally commanded. Because G-d granted women a more modest nature and "the home is her domain," He gave the observance of these three commandments especially to women.

It is appropriate to note, that as a result of the "darkness of exile," darkness is confused with light, and vice versa. This results in a confusion which is contrary to simple logic and contrary to the truth.

There is a claim that in Torah there is an inequality between men and women, to the extent that there is a movement to 'liberate' the women! Promoting behavior which is contrary to



Torah, based, supposedly, on the premise of 'love your fellow Jew', and that there must be equality among all people, as every person is created in the image of G-d— and therefore, women must not be less respected than men!

Torah foresaw this, and commanded "Man should not wear a woman's garments," and similarly, a woman may not wear a man's garments, for each has their special mission in the world and surely a special role in Torah matters. G-d has designated and told us that man's perfection and highest achievement will not come by imitating or dressing like a woman, and likewise for women, their greatest fulfillment is through being what they must be, not by following or comparing themselves to men.

The greatest loss of self-worth that a person can have, is when one strives and battles for to the right to imitate another person! This is where we find Light being mistaken for darkness and vice versa.

Here Torah has given women the greatest possible purpose. The greatest concern of the "Holy Nation," the People endowed with Torah, is to ensure that the generation that received the Torah at Mount Sinai, should continue on to a second generation which will follow in their ways, and the second generation should continue to a third, and so on.

How can there be a continuance to the generation that stood at Sinai? Only through the women!

