



"THREE SPECIAL MITZVOT"

17 Sivan, 5740-1980

In this week's Torah portion, which concludes this convention, we learn of the Mitzvah of separating Challah. This Mitzvah was given to every Jewish woman, to separate Challah from "the first of your dough." And this is the beginning of all eating and drinking in the house.

We are told, first and foremost, to "set aside an offering for G-d," to give a portion to the Almighty. And only then does a Jew think about how to derive his needs from the world in order to support himself, his family, children and grandchildren.

Through the knowledge that the first fruits of everything are for G-d, the entire home and everything in it belongs to G-d. And then G-d declares "I will dwell amongst you." He dwells; He is not merely present, rather, He rests and settles within the heart of each Jew, within every Jewish home, and within the entire Jewish nation, which is comprised of such homes. And this special mission was given to Jewish women and daughters.

This convention began during the Torah portion of Beha'alotecha.

Aharon the High Priest was told that he and the Kohanim who would succeed him, should illuminate the entire Holy Temple, and preceding that, in the Mishkan, by kindling the Menorah's lights.

In every Jewish home as well, each inhabitant must illuminate the home through "the candle of Mitzva and the light of Torah," which brightens the home.

There's a Mitzvah whose illuminating effect is obvious even to the naked eye; even a non-Jewish passerby who observes through the window the Shabbat or holiday candles burning, sees that this is a light which illuminates the home, and light emanates through the window to the entire world.

And who causes this light? Jewish women and girls.

In fact, the Midrash makes a connection between the two types of candles. Through Jewish women and girls lighting candles in her home before Shabbos and festivals, the Midrash says, through being meticulous in lighting them, that Mitzvah, in turn, merits, lights of the Holy Temple, as mentioned in Midrash Yalkut on the portion of Beha'alotecha.

The same is true of the third Mitzvah for women: The verse connecting the two portions of Beha'alotecha and Shelach, which speaks of the Mitzvah of Challah, tells of the great honor bestowed upon Miriam the Prophetess.

G-d Himself, Moshe and Aaron and the entire Mishkan, all waited an entire week until Miriam was ready to proceed.



פרשת שלח

What was Miriam's special accomplishment in the desert? She provided "Miriam's Well" – a spring which followed the Jewish people throughout their journeys in the desert.

The desert is a dry place, with no water. There are no springs; no water at all. Who enabled the observance of family purity, the ability to have children, many children, as G-d desires? It was in the merit of Miriam the Prophetess.

