

# WOMAN'S ROLE

## Parasha Yayishlach

*1* Beislet-d. 34  
 Now Dinah — the daughter of Leah, whom she had borne to Jacob — went out to look over the daughters of the land. *2* Shechem, son of Hamor the Hivvite, the prince of the region, saw her; he took her, lay with her, and violated her. *3* He became deeply attached to Dinah, daughter of Jacob; he loved the maiden and appealed to the maiden's emotions. *4* So Shechem spoke to Hamor, his father, saying, "Take me this girl for a wife."  
*5* Now Jacob heard that he had defiled his daughter Dinah, while his sons were with his cattle in the field; so Jacob kept silent until their arrival.  
*6* Hamor, Shechem's father, went out to Jacob to speak to him. *7* Jacob's sons arrived from the field, when they heard; the men were distressed, and were fired deeply with indignation, for

*2* נר וציל 209  
 Rashi's curiosity is aroused by the fact that the verse traces Dinah's lineage to her mother, which does not conform to the Torah's standard pattern of focusing exclusively on patrilineal descent. We would have expected the verse to say, "Dinah, the daughter of Yaakov, went out..."  
 Rashi explains that  
 • [Dinah] is associated with Leah because she inherited her mother's extroverted personality. Like her, Leah was an outgoing person, as it is written, "When Yaakov came home from the field that evening, Leah went out to meet him..." (ibid. 30:16).  
 Rashi adds that this verse is the source of the popular adage, "Like mother, like daughter."

*3* פסוק ד"א (לה) שבתו של יעקב יושבת אהלים ולא היתה יוצאת החוצה. מה עשה שכם בן חמור, הביא נערות משחקות חוצה לה מתחפפות בתופים. יצאה דינה לראות וכו'.  
 הדברים נפלאים שלא הביא לפניה משוררים לפתוחה, אלא משוררות והוא נראה כדבר ישר וכשר, אבל יש דברי שהוק שגיגם מתאימים לצניעות דבנות ישראל, ושומר נפשו ונפש בני ביתו יבדוק בכל הדברים האלה אם הם לרוח התורה.

*5* R. Freund in print - pg 199  
 It is not without a fair degree of trepidation that I approach this topic. By comparison, marital harmony [Shalom Bayis] and the education of our children, for instance, are easy topics: Everyone is for Shalom Bayis. But the subject of Orthodox women working is one that excites strong feelings and often sharp disagreement.  
*6* Listen to Your Messages - R. Freund  
 You are entering an environment that doesn't even begin to understand what you are all about. In fact, you really should carry a passport with you every single morning when you go to work. Why? Because you are going from your strong Jewish enclaves, wherever they may be, into a foreign country, a country that does not understand about *kashrus*,

*4* כיוצא בזה מצינו בפ' זו ו' ותצא דינה בת לאה אשר ילדה ליעקב לראות בכנות הארץ' ואמרו ע"ז חז"ל (הובא ברש"י): 'בת לאה ולא בת יעקב? אלא ע"ש יציאתה נקראת בת לאה. שאף היא יצאנית היתה שנאמר 'ותצא לאה לקראתו ותאמר אלי תבא' ועלי' משלו המשל 'כאמה כבתה' — והנה מצינו שחז"ל דברו הרבה בשבחה של לאה אמנו שהשתדלה להרבות שבטים מיעקב אבינו וכמו שאמרו חז"ל (מד"ר יוצא פ' ע"ב): 'אמר ר' אבהו צפה הקב"ה שלא היתה כוננת אלא להעמיד שבטים' ועל אותו מעשה עצמו נאמר 'וישמע ה' אל לאה ותלד בן חמישי ליעקב' ובמד"ד אמרו רז"ל על המקרא 'וישכב עמה בלילה הוא' 'כביכול הקב"ה סיעו שיצא מהם יששכר', ורחל אמנו שלא השתדלה כ"כ נענשה, וכמו שאמרו חז"ל (מד"ר הנ"ל) 'לפי שולולה במשכב הצדיק לא זכתה להקבר עמו' ועל לאה אמרו 'לאה הפסידה דוראים ונשתכרה שני שבטים ובכירה' ואעפ"כ ירדו חמיינו ז"ל לתוך עמק נפש האדם ומצאו כי במעשה טוב זה עזרה לה תכונתה שחסר לה קצת ממת הצניעות של 'כבודה בת מלך פנימה' ולמדנו זאת מדברי התורה שכשיצאה דינה לראות בכנות הארץ נקראה בת לאה. כי לרחמנא גלי' שאחרי כל צדקות לאה אמנו, ואחר זה שהיתה מתאוה להעמיד שבטים, לא היתה יכולה לצאת לקראת יעקב לאמר לו אלי תבא, לולא היתה לקוי' קצת במדת 'כבודה בת מלך פנימה', ואם כי השתמשה בזה לדבר טוב ונעלה, בכל זאת פעלה מדת הלקוי שהיתה בנפשה — אם אף במדה הכי קטנה, מדת יצאנות זו — ונמסרה בתולדה לדינה בתה, ובהתמוג מדה זו עם עוד סבות וכחות שונים, גרם לה למעשה זה של 'ותצא דינה בת לאה לראות בכנות הארץ' ומוריעה קטנה זו שבנפש לאה יצא דבר נורא — שדינה בת לאה נטמאה והיה עלול שרושם טומאה זו ימסר לבנות ישראל לדורות וישאר בהן חסרון צניעות, לולא עשו בני יעקב רעש גדול והרגו את אנשי שכם לפי חרב.

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 On the one hand, it is an undeniable fact that a large percentage of Orthodox women today work outside the home, and that situation is not likely to change any time in the near

זה בעצם היה מצבם של השמש והירח - הלבנה - בתחילה, כשברא הקב"ה את עולמו. השמש עמדה מול הלבנה, ובעולם ראו "שני מאורות גדולים". השמש היתה מקור אור עצמי, והלבנה היתה משקפת את אור השמש בשלימותו, ונראתה בדיוק כמוה.

השמש היא כדור ענק של אש, והיא מהווה מקור עצמי של אור, של אנרגיה ושל חום. הירח לעומת זאת הוא גוף ללא שום אנרגיה וללא שום אור עצמי. הירח מאיר, אך בטה"כ משקף הוא את אור השמש. אם נרצה לתת משל על הירח, הרי הוא כמו מראה.

והנה כשמעמידים מול מראה אור או איזה דמות כלשהי, כמעט ולא ניתן להכיר מיהי הדמות עצמה ומיהי המראה המשקפת אותה, כי שניהם נראים בדיוק אותו דבר.

בענין הגדרת תפקיד האשה בעולם, מצינו לכאורה סתירות גדולות בתורתנו הקדושה. האיש מברך בכל יום בשם ומלכות: "ברוך אתה... שלא עשני אשה!" ומשתמע מכאן שהאיש שמח בזה שאיננו אשה. ואם יש מקום לשמחה, נראה שהאיש יותר חשוב מהאשה, ואכן ישנן נשים הנעלבות מהברכה שהאיש מברך..

לעומתו, האשה היא כמו הירח - אין לה אור עצמי, היא כמו מראה! אין לה לא תורה ולא תפילה!

כך גם לענייננו: האיש - מה שהוא פועל, זה מה שהוא. אין בכוחו להגיע ליותר מכך. לעומת זאת האשה - היא משקפת את מה שנמצא בכיוון אליו היא פונה. אם היא פונה כלפי העולם הגשמי - הרי שזה מה שהיא כעת! אבל אם היא פונה לקב"ה - היא מקרינה את קדושתו של בורא עולם, ושוב אינה נזקקת לכלום! התורה והמצוות הם כלים שמטרתם לקרב את האדם אל בוראו. אבל האשה לא צריכה זאת! היא פונה למעלה וממילא מקרינה מתוכה את קדושת הבורא ית'!

יתירה מזו, נאמר בפסוק: "אשת חיל עטרת בעלה" (משלי יב, ד) - האיש מתכבד באשתו. האשה היא העטרה - הכתר - של בעלה, כלומר: היא יותר גדולה וחשובה ממנו, וגם המיקום שלה הוא מעליו, כמו שהכתר מונח על הראש. ואף שהפסוק בפשוטו נאמר לעתיד לבוא, אך סוכ"ס גם כאן, בעולם הזה, "אשת חיל עטרת בעלה" - האשה גדולה יותר מבעלה!

האיש הוא בבחינת 'שמש'. כשם שהשמש היא מקור עצמי של אור, אנרגיה וחום, כך האיש הוא כביכול 'גנרטור' עצמי 'המייצר' מעלות וגדלות. הוא מקרין מתוכו תורה ומצוות - שופר, סוכה, לולב וכל המצוות כולן. האיש הוא 'גנרטור' של כל הקדושות.

אם כן, אמרה הלבנה, לשם מה אני צריכה אמצעי? אינני רוצה לקבל את קדושתו ואת האור שלי מהשמש, אשר בעצם מקבלת אותם ממך ית'. אני רוצה לקבל זאת ישירות ממך! ואז אוכל להיות אפילו יותר גדולה מהשמש - שהרי אקבל את כוחי ישירות מהקב"ה!

נמצא אם כן - וזאת היתה תשובת הקב"ה לירח - שמולד הלבנה, שהוא ראש החודש, אינו נקבע לפי השמש - המולד הטבעי, דהיינו המפגש של השמש עם הירח - אלא הסנהדרין, על פי התורה הקדושה שהיא קדושת ה' בעצמה - הם הקובעים מתי הוא מולד הלבנה!

כאן נענה הקב"ה לבקשת הירח - מהיום אינך תלוי בשמש, אלא בסנהדרין, כלומר: בי!

מאיך, הנשים גם הן מברכות: "ברוך אתה... שעשני כרצוני" - אני נבראתי לפי רצון ה'! ומהברכה הזו נראה שהקב"ה אוהב את הנשים יותר מהגברים! ובאמת כך אמרו חז"ל: "גדולה הבטחה שהבטיחן הקדוש ברוך הוא לנשים יותר מן האנשים" (ברכות יז ע"א).

לעומתו, האשה היא כמו הירח - אין לה אור עצמי, היא כמו מראה! אין לה לא תורה ולא תפילה!

כשאשה מחליטה לפנות אל הקב"ה - פנייה זו מגדירה את כל אישיותה, וכעת כל מהותה היא "קדושת ה' יתברך"! באותה שעה היא עולה עשרות מונים ויותר על פני בעלה!

לכן נקראת האשה "אשת חיל עטרת בעלה", כי היא השורש שלנו! היא מקבלת את קדושתה ישירות מהבורא-עולם! היא כל כולה "שעשני כרצוני" - היא כביכול רצונו של ה' יתברך בכבודו ובעצמו!

אם ניקח את התמונה היפה ביותר בעולם - למשל: תמונה של החפץ חיים זצ"ל - ונתבונן: מה יותר יפה - תמונה של החפץ חיים, או מראה? התשובה תהיה: תלוי היכן המראה עומדת. אם המראה עומדת מול בהמה, תמונתו של החפץ חיים יפה פי כמה וכמה. אם היא עומדת ליד סתם בן אדם - גם אז תמונת החפץ חיים יפה הרבה יותר. אבל אם המראה עומדת מול יהושע בן נון? - כאן כבר התשובה תשתנה. סוכ"ס יהושע בן נון היה גדול יותר מהח"ח זצ"ל...

נשים צריכות לדעת זאת: כל ספר שקוראים, כל חדשות ששומעים, עצם המגע עם העולם - אצל האיש זה ביטול תורה. אבל אצל האשה זוהי פגיעה בכל האישיות שלה! הראיה הזו מגדירה אותה. כל המהות שלה פשוט מקרינה ומשקפת את מה שעומד מולה!

מה יש לה? - את מה שהיא משקפת! אם היא פונה למעלה, אל השי"ת, וכמו שהלבנה אכן עשתה - היא משקפת את הקדושה העליונה, ובזה היא מתעלה למדרגה הרבה יותר גבוהה ממדרגת בעלה, משום שבעלה אינו אלא מה שהוא, ואילו היא - משקפת את השי"ת! לא פחות! הוא 'גנרטור' שאמור לייצר בעצמו את מעלותיו וגדלותו, ממילא הוא נצרך לתלמוד תורה ולקיום מצוות כתפילין, שופר וכו'. אבל היא - בבחינת 'מראה' שאם תפנה את עצמה לכיוון הנכון - כלפי מעלה - תשקף את הבורא ית'.

## 23 With Hearts Full of Faith - Salmon

I would like to begin by putting the woman's role in somewhat sharper perspective. What exactly is expected of her as a mother and a wife?

One of the darkest chapters in the history of the Jewish enslavement in Egypt was Pharaoh's decree of death to all male Jewish newborns. In the Torah's description of the events, two Jewish midwives emerge as heroines who rescued numerous infants. The Torah identifies them as Shifrah and Puah.

Who were these women?

24 If Yocheved and Miriam achieved the gift of prophecy, they must have been on an extraordinarily high intellectual and spiritual level. They had great wisdom, wide knowledge and never any thoughts about insignificant things. And yet, how does the Torah choose to define these prophetesses? As Shifrah and Puah, women who tend to and comfort little infants, as women who take care of babies.

25 This, explains R' Shmuel Rozovsky, Rosh Yeshivah of Ponevezh, is the primary role of the woman, to take care of the young, to care for them and nurture them and mold them into the people God meant them to be. It is a calling of the highest order, a calling that brings distinction and honor even to women who have attained the gift of prophecy.

26 Bodes: Sals-Rebebin Heller  
The crisis of American Judaism is the failure to transmit that twentieth-century oxymoron: Judaism without the home, a hopeless creature that has little chance of survival and virtually no chance to reproduce. Paralleling the devaluation of the home in secular society, certain strains of Judaism have endeavored to replace the home with the synagogue as the central locale for the observance of Judaism. Naturally, therefore, women who want to fully partake of Jewish observance have set their sights on practices that take place in the public setting of the synagogue, such

as praying together as a *minyan* (quorum of ten men) and being called to the Torah, while virtually ignoring the practices that take place in the home.

29a With Hearts Full of Faith  
People are born as babies, because their characters have to be developed in stages before they can become adults. We are not like animals that are finished products as soon as they learn how to walk and eat. An adult human being is full of complex emotions and personality traits that need to be molded very carefully. The process starts in the cradle and continues for the rest of his life.

When a mother allows an infant to cry and does not comfort him, he is in danger of growing up a hardened person, a person who feels unloved and rejected, who feels that no one cares. Of course, you don't have to come running every time the child lets out a little peep. But there is a limit to how long you can let him

29b cry. I know there are those who believe a child should be allowed to cry himself out, but I consider it a serious blunder. There must be some sympathy for the child, some mercy. You cannot put the child in another room and let him cry for hours just because you want to go to sleep. That is cruel and insensitive, and the child feels it. He may already be on his way to becoming a dropout. Rejection doesn't necessarily start at fifteen or sixteen years of age. It can and often does start in the cradle.

22 וכוונת דברי חז"ל "עשרה קבים של שיחה ירדו לעולם", לא כמו שאנו חושבים שדיבורים הכוונה "פטפוטים"... אלא הכוונה עשרה קבין של אפשרות לשוחח - להתקשר - עם הקב"ה ירדו לעולם. "אין שיחה אלא תפילה" (ברכות כו ע"ב) [וכמו שאמרו חז"ל עה"פ "ויצא יצחק לשוח בשדה" - לשון תפלה, כמו ישפוך שיחו" (רש"י שם)]. מתוכם "תשעה נטלו נשים"! כי התפקיד של הנשים הוא לשוחח עם הקב"ה כל הזמן. לפנות אליו ולהתקשר עמו!

\* ברגע שהאשה לוקחת מבעלה את התשע עשיריות שיחה, הריהי "אשת חיל עטרת בעלה". וכמה שיהיה הבעל גדול בתורה, ואף גדול הדור, אבל האשה הפשוטה ביותר, אם כל הזמן פונה היא אל ה' ומדברת אתו, ויחד עם זאת משפיעה את הקדושה הזאת על ילדיה - אשה זו היא "עטרת בעלה", היא הכתר.

27 The majority of the Jewish feminist movement's demands for equality thus have as their source the mistaken premise that the synagogue is the most significant place in Judaism and that therefore its roles and functions are of primary importance in Jewish life. The truth is that since the destruction of the Temple two thousand years ago, the home has been and continues to be the holiest and most important place for the practice of Judaism.

And the home is the domain of the woman. This is not only a Jewish concept, but a deep psychological axiom. Among the most basic symbols recognized in psychoanalysis are the enclosed structure symbolizing woman and the soaring tower symbolizing man. These symbols are representative of basic psychological constructs that appear in dreams, drawings, and so on. Traditional Judaism maintains that the woman is the home.

28 \* Only in a society that does not recognize internal power and devalues the home could the notion of women as powerless arise. The solution is not empowerment, but "impowerment" - the recognition of the inner power that has always been available to Jewish women.

30 Rabbeinu Yonah, in *Iggeres HaTeshuvah*, discusses God's instructions to Moses (*Exodus 19:3*), "So shall you say to the house of Jacob [the women] and to the sons of Israel [the men]." Why did God tell Moses to speak to the women first? God wanted Moses to first give the women a synopsis of the Torah, Rabbeinu Yonah explains, because "they are the ones that send off their children to school and see to it that they study the Torah, and they are merciful when their children come home from school."

Let's take a close look at these words. What does it mean that the mothers "send their children off to school"? Does that make them better than the fathers who pay the tuition? And what does it mean that the mothers "are merciful when their children come home from school"?

31 This seems to be the key to engendering love for Torah in young children. The way the mother sends her children off to school in the morning and the way she welcomes them home when they return will determine how they feel about Torah.

The mothers "are merciful when their children return." Apparently, every child coming home from school needs a good dose of mercy. He has just had a hard day, and he needs his mother to receive him and welcome him and make him feel good.

32 Imagine a mother greeting her child at the door in a stern teacher's voice, "So what did you learn in school today? Do you know what your homework is? Did you behave yourself today? I want a full report!" This is not what the child needs, an extension of the school he just left. He needs his home to be a place of refuge. He needs his

mother to greet him with warmth and kindness, with a reassuring word, a cup of milk and a cookie. He needs his mother to put her arm around his shoulder and ask him how he's feeling. He needs a bit of mercy after a hard day at school, and then he'll be all right.

There isn't a single child that doesn't feel a bit abused by the end of the day. Even if a child enjoys learning, there's a limit. He can sit for one hour, two hours, three, but a whole school day is exhausting and grueling. If he comes home from school to a merciful and understanding mother, it is all bearable. But if he doesn't, the school years are just a sentence to hard labor, from the time he gets up until he goes to sleep. Day after day, a long sentence of hard labor. Who can stand it?

34 Unfortunately, however, one of the most debilitating aspects of the dark *galus* in which we presently find ourselves is that ideal situations are hard to come by. Almost no one can live a natural, normal life any longer. Almost no one enjoys a life that is whole and tranquil, with the father and mother fulfilling their specific roles in building the family, establishing the home and raising the children. Everything is artificial and contrived. Even if they may seem superficially prosperous and comfortable, very few households function as ideal Jewish households should.

36 Such a mother cannot really go out to the workplace, because by the time she returns, she's the abused one, the one that's had it, the one that is desperately in need of mercy and comforting. When she returns exhausted from the workplace, her child is already waiting for her at the babysitter's, and everything is turned on its head. He is the one who has to welcome and comfort her, rather than the other way around. But which child is clever enough to welcome his overworked mother properly? Instead of soothing her, he is more likely to whine and complain and add to her stress and strain. That is how their day comes to an end. Not exactly an ideal situation.

38 Husband and wife must, therefore, sit down and find a way to create a warm, happy atmosphere for the children even though the conditions do not lend themselves ideally to it. They must literally train themselves to act in ways that do not come naturally to them, to become a new type of mother and father. She must calm

39 *Listen to your Message - Reframe*  
In contemporary society, a person is nothing unless he succeeds in his profession. Otherwise, he is a failure. To be a person of distinction, one must have a career of distinction. That's the equation. A person of distinction equals a career of distinction. That's what America is all about.

What happens when two people are thrown together on a train or a plane? They usually strike up a conversation. Usually within the first three minutes of the conversation, one of them will ask, "So what do you do?"

\* "What do you do?" What does he mean by that? Is he talking about family? No. Is he talking about politics? No. Is he talking about religion? Certainly not. So what is he talking about? He is talking about professions. Careers. What do you do for a living? What do you do professionally?

Why is this question so urgent, so critical, that it comes up so quickly? Very simple. Because in contemporary American society the only way you measure, evaluate and know people

42

\* "Business is not what you are," the Brisker Rav told him. "Business is what the *Ribono Shel Olam* gives you. But what are you? The only answer is, *Ivri anochi*, I'm a devout Jew."

33 And the way he is sent off to school is just as important. If everything is bedlam, if he is scolded for trying to pour the milk on his cereal and spilling it on the table, if he has one arm in his coat sleeve and the other sleeve is dragging on the floor behind him as he runs out the door, can he come to school in a proper frame of mind? Is it a wonder he ends up hating school? That is not how mothers are meant to "send their children off to school."

35

It is important to realize what will be missing in the home when she goes out to work. It is not just her presence during the hours she is working and that the children need to be cared for by other people. Even more important, it is the effect on her disposition when she is at home. Instead of being a calm, relaxed person, the *Shifrah* and *Puah* of the family, she can come home frustrated and exhausted by the strains and stresses of her work. She may be short-tempered with the children when they don't really deserve it, and the whole rhythm of the household may be affected.

37

down when she walks through the door of her home. Regardless of how distraught she feels, she must get those emotions under control and make herself feel calm and happy so that she can greet her children as a mother should, so that the rest of the day will be a warm, positive and secure experience for them.

As for her husband, he must make arrangements and adjustments in his own life to cover for her as much as possible. Most important, he must appreciate what she is doing and recognize that she is not obligated to do it.

40

That answer, that concept, that what defines us as being devout Jews is so alien to the secular world. They cannot conceive that a person would be defined by his relationship with the Almighty. But according to the Torah, that is what it's all about. There's nothing else that should matter. *Ivri Anochi*. I am a devout Jew.

41

is by what they do professionally. If you want to know someone, to understand him, find out what he does for a living.

Think about it. Think about how children are conditioned to this mindset from early childhood. We ask a little boy or a little girl, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" And they are expected to answer, "I want to be a doctor, a lawyer, an accountant, a dentist, a businessperson." But that is not really the appropriate answer. The question was, What do you want to be? The answer, however, only addresses what they want to do. Unfortunately, in contemporary society, those are one and the same thing. You are what you do. Who are you? I'm a doctor. I'm a lawyer. That's who I am. That's what defines me. And unless I achieve success at my profession, I am a failure.

➤ This is not a Torah value. It is the opposite of what a Jew should be.

43 R. Fard in Post

Nor can we discount the influence of the society in which we live. The media today tends to portray women who stay home and raise the children as somehow substandard creatures lacking both intellectual ability and ambition. Ask a woman who does so what she does and she is likely to answer with embarrassment, "I'm just a housewife." That "just" says it all. I read recently about a woman who had to give up her job after the birth of a child. For months after the birth, she was afraid to leave her home for fear that she would have to fill out a form with a box for occupation and write "housewife."

45

Prior to her violation by Shechem, Dinah the daughter of Leah is described as going out to view the daughters of the land. Chazal comment on the fact that she is described as the daughter of Leah and not as the daughter of Yaakov. They connect her going out to the going out of her mother Leah. Leah met Yaakov in the field and told him that she had exchanged her son Reuven's *dudaim* for the right to have him remain in her tent that night. Plainly, Chazal condemn Dinah for her eagerness to leave the protection of her father's house to become acquainted with those living around them. But if so, what is the connection to Leah? Leah's going out on that occasion is considered praiseworthy: Yissachar, the tribe of Torah scholars, was her reward for having traded the *dudaim* for Rachel's night with Yaakov. Indeed, the self-denial needed to become a Torah scholar was an inheritance to Yissachar from his mother Leah, who humiliated herself by going out to the field to bring Yaakov to her tent.

We are left, then, with a paradox: The same act of Leah's which produced Yissachar also led to an immodest act by her daughter Dinah and the terrible consequences that resulted from it. Rabbi Elya Svei once pointed out at an Agudath Israel convention that we see from this Chazal that even the most laudable venture out of the home, no matter how praiseworthy the motives, carries with it built-in pitfalls. Reb Elya was certainly not saying that leaving the home is prohibited. After all, Agudath Israel of America — on whose Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah he serves — has a full-scale program to train women as computer programmers. What he was saying is that when a woman leaves the safe confines of her home, she must do so with her eyes open to the dangers involved and exercise extreme caution.

48

While women's progress on the job is visible and public, men and women are sorting out the implications in the privacy of their homes and questioning the price they have paid for the change. Americans, both women and men, say they are unhappy about the toll on their family and personal lives. Since the publication of Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*, women who work outside the home report that their children and their marriages are being shortchanged, and they lament having too little time for themselves.

52 Lists + Your Messages

Every one of us who steps into the secular world, who ventures into the professional arena, must be fully aware that he or she is walking across a roaring falls on a tightrope. And he has to make sure that there are safety nets to catch him if he stumbles.

44

(Can we say unequivocally that good Jewish women should never step into the workplace? The issues are far too complex for such a simple answer. Many families would be unable to afford

46

Scenario II: Now we are talking about a woman who is a bit older, between 25 and 30, securely anchored in her marriage, her family, her community. She has to face a different problem: guilt. She has to watch her children cry in the morning as she pulls out of the driveway, listen to their constant questions about when she is coming home, endure their complaints about their babysitters. Over and over each day, she has to ask herself: Am I doing the right thing?

I read once about a woman who was a regional supervisor for AT&T, who was expressing the sadness that often goes with the long hours away from home, such as the time she called her housekeeper from an out-of-town business trip to be told that her baby had just taken his first steps.

47

Scenario III: A middle-aged working woman whose children are older and do not return home until the late afternoon. She does not have to feel that she is cheating them in the same way a woman with younger children does. Her problem is different: She is expected to be a superwoman. Even though half her waking hours are spent at work and commuting back and forth, she is still expected to be the complete wife and mother making sure the larder is always full, the shirts ironed, the cabinets clean, the children well dressed and well mannered. In short, she is expected upon her return from work to slip into a phone booth — à la Clark Kent — and come out wearing an apron proclaiming "Super Mom."

49

Nor can we ignore the inherent dangers of the workplace. Our standards of modesty and propriety in speech and action are far from those of the society at large. Flirtatious repartee, suggestive comments, off-color jokes are commonplace.

50

Of course not all contact between the sexes in the office takes the form of sexual harassment. There is also a great deal of camaraderie. Men and women are thrown together in close contact; they work together under pressure on big projects, the outcome of which often becomes — at least for the moment — the most important thing in their lives. Everyone is well dressed, seen at their best, and, unfortunately, women are often treated better and with more respect than in their own homes. All this threatens marriages.

ועינין רש"י יצאנית היתה ולכך נכשלה. ומכאן חובה לתורים להוזהר בבנותיהם במשנה הוזהרות, בבחירת מקום העבודה שיהא דוקא עם בנות חרדיות הוזהרות בלשונן ולעולם לא יסמכו על בנותיהם, במיוחד בתקופה שרופצה בכומנינו, ובעוה"ר ראינו שמקום העבודה גרם למכשולים ואסונות רבים.

53

What are those safety nets? Our homes; our *yeshivos*; our *rabbanim*; our spouses, who can tell their mates when they're veering from the path; the time we set aside for learning Torah and doing *mitzvos*. All of these are our safety nets, without which going out into the world would be like crossing Niagara Falls on a tightrope, foolhardy and dangerous.

That has to be our goal — to stay close to our safety nets as we bring honor and glory to His great and holy Name.

54 Ner Uziel - R. Uziel Mikovsky

This explanation poses a difficulty. Rashi appears to be implying that Leah committed some sort of wrongdoing by going out to greet Yaakov as he returned from his work in the field. We may detect a veiled accusation here — an implication that Leah acted with some degree of impropriety. This seems completely illogical in light of the fact that it was Yaakov, her husband, whom she went out to meet.

Although the terms *extroverted* and *outgoing* may sound negative in Rashi's words, we have to understand this in the proper context. According to the Torah's outlook, every character trait is potentially good. Its worth, as it is manifest in any given situation, is defined by the nature of each individual's ultimate objective.

55 We learned that Yaakov prepared for his imminent encounter with Esav by taking "his two wives, his two handmaids, and his eleven sons and sending them across the Yabok River" (ibid. 32:23). In reference to this verse the Sages ask, "And where was Dinah?" to which they answer: "Yaakov had concealed her in a locked trunk, so that Esav would not see her and so become infatuated with her" (Bereishis Rabbah 76:9). The Sages say Yaakov acted improperly in hiding Dinah, and he was held responsible for this act. "He was punished in kind for withholding her

from Esav, since she could have positively influenced him, for she would have caused him to repent for his sins. Because he withheld her from Esav, she fell into the hands of Shechem" (ibid.).

The Sages' criticism of Yaakov seems unfair. What option did he have? Should he willingly give his daughter to a scoundrel like Esav? No reasonable person would have done such a thing. Yet since the Sages criticize Yaakov, we must conclude that had Esav married Dinah he would have repented and become a truly righteous person.

58 Leah was not completely exonerated from her predestined task. The mission that she had herself rejected was assigned to her daughter, Dinah, who inherited from Leah the very characteristics that would have enabled Leah to tame Esav's passions and guide him back to the path of righteousness. Yaakov understood the role Dinah was meant to undertake because of her unique strengths, and that is precisely why he concealed her. Like Leah, he could not abide the notion of becoming personally involved (through his daughter's marriage) in weaning Esav of his excessive zeal for bloodshed and evil.

59 Habitual tendencies cannot be repressed; unless one channels

properly, they burst forth unpredictably, usually with disastrous results. When the naturally outgoing nature Dinah had inherited from Leah was not employed for the constructive purpose of bringing Esav back to the fold, as God had originally intended, it backfired, causing her and her family untold anguish. Since Dinah felt an irresistible urge to "go out," she made an attempt to establish contact with the Canaanite girls to introduce monotheism to them. Dinah could not resist the urge to apply her dynamic personality to positively influence others and shape their behavior. She felt driven to change someone — if not Esav, then the Canaanite girls. Unfortunately, Dinah did not take into account the dangers to which every outreach professional is exposed. She failed to anticipate people of lowly character, such as Shechem, slithering around the world.

Hence we see that the Sages were not criticizing Leah for being an "outgoing" and "extroverted" woman. They merely explained what it was that motivated Dinah to go out to the Canaanite girls and attempt to establish a new Torah outreach center for women in the city of Shechem.

56 (ב) והצא דינה. שרש כ' דינה לא תפס בזה, שלא תחמר שצלה גדר הנשים, כי היסוד בת לאה, שהיה נעשה בהלה, ואשר יורה לעקב, שגילה היה מציחס אל יעקב שציה נעש וכשרה, כי לא הייתה יכולה ללכת אחר התחריטם רק לראות בלבדו הארץ ובתקלומותן.

57 Originally Leah — Dinah's mother — was destined to marry Esav. She had the ability to rectify Esav's adverse character traits. Theirs was a match made in Heaven, for Esav and Leah shared critical aspects of their personalities. Unlike Yaakov, who sat in tents and studied Torah, Esav was in the habit of going out to the fields to hunt game. Similarly, Leah was not one to wait at home for her husband: "When Yaakov came home from the field that evening, Leah went out to meet him." The characteristics that Leah had in common with Esav would have enabled her to influence his behavior and to guide him back to the path of his righteous forefathers. Although Leah realized that this was her special mission in life, she refused to undertake it. She simply could not bring herself to marry the likes of Esav. We can surmise the magnitude of Leah's panic over the prospect of marrying Esav from the Torah's words: "Leah's eyes were soft" (Bereishis 29:17) — they were constantly filled with tears (Rashi). Eventually God relented on account of her prayers and permitted her to marry Yaakov instead.

60 Inside Story - R. Taber

"But 'within' does not necessarily mean indoors. The woman, too, has a role that extends beyond the home, extends also to the most alien of daughters and the most pagan of lands. A woman who has been blessed with the aptitude and talent to influence her sisters, can, and must, be

an "out-goer," periodically leaving her haven of holiness to reach out to those who have lost grounding and direction in their lives.

And when she does, she need not, and must not, assume the warrior stance of the man. Confrontation and conquest is not the only way to deal with the outside world—there is also a feminine way, a gentle, modest and compassionate way to extract goodness from the evil that rages without. Confrontation is often necessary, but it is also often ineffective and even detrimental. Even the fiercest of battles needs the feminine touch of the outgoing woman."

61 The Torah is very clear about the different characteristics and roles imparted by the Creator to man and woman. Man is a "conqueror,"<sup>10</sup> charged to confront and transform a resistant, often hostile, world. To this end, he has been supplied with an extroverted and aggressive nature, a nature he is to apply constructively in the war of life—the war to combat the negative without and to redeem the positive elements and opportunities held captive in the most spiritually desolate corners of G-d's creation.

Woman is his diametric opposite. Her intrinsic nature is non-confrontational, introverted, modest. For while man battles the demons without, woman cultivates the purity within. She is the mainstay of the home, nurturer and educator of the family, guardian of all that is holy in G-d's world. "The entire glory of the king's daughter is within."

an "out-goer," periodically leaving her haven of holiness to reach out to those who have lost grounding and direction in their lives.

62 And when she does, she need not, and must not, assume the warrior stance of the man. Confrontation and conquest is not the only way to deal with the outside world—there is also a feminine way, a gentle, modest and compassionate way to extract goodness from the evil that rages without. Confrontation is often necessary, but it is also often ineffective and even detrimental. Even the fiercest of battles needs the feminine touch of the outgoing woman."

63 נאמה והגדוה

"שופטים בלימוד תורה", שמטרתו הוא ללמוד עם אחד הרואה לדעת מה זה תורה ויהדות. שיעור קבוע פעם בשבוע. זה דבר קטן שכל אחד יכול לעשות, כל אי יכול ליתן שעה מזמנו בשבוע ללמוד עם אדם