

The Shul

at the Lubavitch Center

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February 15, 2020

Yitro

20 Shevat, 5780

Making a House A Home

There used to be a controversy whether a woman who stayed at home should be called a "homemaker" or a "housewife." The argument ran that she wasn't married to the house, a thing of wood or stone and that anyway a house was only a structure. But she did make a home, a place of nurture, sharing and growth. It was a way to elevate the status of a woman who "didn't work," meaning, of course who didn't work outside the home. Running a household, er, sorry, making a home, requires managerial, administrative and negotiating skills that put CEOs of major corporations to shame.

In a way, it was a silly controversy because calling a "housewife" a "homemaker," or vice versa, didn't increase the pay and probably didn't affect the respect she got. But still, there's something profound in the thought that it takes a "housewife" to be a "homemaker."

Let's consider one of the most famous passages in the Torah: "Make Me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them." This command to build the Tabernacle, the prototype for the Temple, has a grammatical anomaly, noted by the rabbis. It should have said, "that I may dwell in it." It says "that I may dwell among them" to teach us that each and every Jew must build an inner sanctuary, a place in the heart, so to speak, where G-d can dwell.

This concept of making a dwelling has a close connection with how the world was created. In the beginning of Genesis, the Torah says in regard to the world "that G-d created it to make." It's the same verb as "to make Me a sanctuary." It means we are to make the world, to perfect it, to transform it into, yes, a dwelling place for G-d.

So the external, physical dwelling - the world or the Temple - resembles and reflects the internal, spiritual dwelling - the heart and mind of every Jew.

What does this have to do with Jewish women, and whether we think in terms of "homemaker" or "housewife"?

Well, the Hebrew term for the Temple is Beit HaMikdash - the house of sanctity. And a synagogue, today's miniature Beit HaMikdash, is called a Beit Keneset - a house of assembly. (And the place where Torah is studied is called a Beit Midrash - a house of study.)

And the Jewish woman is called the Akeret haBayit - the foundation of the house. That is, just as the foundation supports the structure, the woman supports the house of Israel. Without a firm foundation, no building can endure. And without the woman conducting herself and her home - her household - in a Jewish manner, no Jewish home can survive. For it is principally the woman who insures that the house will be kosher, be Sabbath observant and follow the laws of family purity.

But the reflection of the internal home in the external house extends beyond a street address and the family. As mentioned above, the transformation of the entire world begins with the construction of the Jewish sanctuary - the (external) house and the (internal) home. Both have to be built. In this sense, activities "in the outside world" - whether helping another Jew perform a mitzva or interacting with the non-Jewish world in a way that it, too, becomes a dwelling place - correspond to building the house and making it a home.

So maybe it doesn't matter whether the term "homemaker" or "housewife" is used. But what does matter is that the Jewish woman fulfill her mission as the Akeret Habayit - the one taking the lead in transforming the world.

(by Dovid Y. B. Kaufmann from <http://www.lchaimweekly.org/>)

In the last months of his life Yaakov (Eugene) Fischer expressed a special interest in stimulating the dedication of plaques on the Shul board which is prominently located in the hall at the entrance to the Shul. I believe this would be a most appropriate way for us to honor him and support the Shul as well. Below is the list of items available. Please contact Rabbi Kaplan for more information.

1. Top (large) Plaques \$5,400
2. Medium Plaques \$3,600
3. Small Plaques \$1,000
4. Simcha leaf \$180

Not for a Prize

A well-known Mishnah (Avot 1:3) teaches: "Antignos of Socho received the Torah from Shimon Ha'tzaddik. He (Antignos) used to say, 'Do not be like servants who serve their master in order to receive a reward. Rather, be like servants who serve their master not for the purpose of receiving a reward, and may the fear of Heaven be upon you.'" [Until here from the Mishnah]

R' Yitzchak Abarbanel z"l (1437-1508; Portugal, Spain and Italy) writes: Antignos learned this lofty teaching from our Parashah, from the verses (Shmot 19:4-5), "You have seen what I did to Egypt, and that I have borne you on the wings of eagles and brought you to Me. And now, if you listen well to Me and observe My covenant, you shall be for Me the most beloved treasure of all peoples, for the entire world is Mine." These verses are a prelude to the giving of the Torah, and the first of them, writes R' Abarbanel, is declaring: Why are you obligated to accept My Torah and perform My commandments? Because of the good that I did for you in the past, i.e., "What I did to Egypt, and that I have borne you on the wings of eagles and brought you to Me." It is true, continues R' Abarbanel, that there will be reward in the future, i.e., "If you listen well to Me and observe My covenant, you shall be for Me the most beloved treasure of all peoples [and] you shall be for Me a kingdom of Kohanim and a holy nation." However, that is not the reason why you should serve Me. Similarly, R' Abarbanel concludes, Moshe instructed us in Devarim (10:20-22) to serve Hashem because of the great and wondrous things He has done for us in the past. (Nachalat Avot)

(by Rabbi Shlomo Katz from Project Genesis at www.torah.org)



The shul matzah baking trip is on Sunday, 2/23.

Kiddush this Shabbat is being sponsored
on memory of the Yahrzeit of

Eugene Fischer — Yaakov Mordechai Ben HaRav Zev Yehudah



SHUL DIRECTORY

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DAVENING AND SHIURIM SCHEDULE

Friday, 2/14 — 19 Shevat

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
 Candles — 5:24 p.m.
 Minchah / Ma'ariv — 5:25 p.m.

Shabbat, 2/15 — 20 Shevat

Shacharit — 9:00 a.m.
 Sof Z'man Kriat Shema — 9:38 a.m.
 Beitzah Gemora Shiur — 4:40 p.m.
 Minchah & Seudah Shilishit — 5:10 p.m.
 Ma'ariv — 6:25 p.m.

Sunday, 2/16 — 21 Shevat

Shacharit — 8:00 a.m.
 Minchah / Ma'ariv — 5:30 p.m.

Monday, 2/17 — 22 Shevat

Shacharit — 6:50 a.m.
 Kerisus Gemora Shiur — 7:45 p.m.
 Ma'ariv — 8:15 p.m.

Tuesday, 2/18 — 23 Shevat

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
 Kerisus Gemora Shiur — 7:45 p.m.
 Ma'ariv — 8:15 p.m.

Wednesday, 2/19 — 24 Shevat

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
 Kerisus Gemora Shiur — 7:45 p.m.
 Ma'ariv — 8:15 p.m.

Thursday, 2/20 — 25 Shevat

Shacharit — 6:50 a.m.
 Kerisus Gemora Shiur — 7:45 p.m.
 Ma'ariv — 8:15 p.m.

Friday, 2/21 — 26 Shevat

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
 Candles — 5:32 p.m.
 Minchah / Ma'aiv — 5:30 p.m.