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# **Parshas YISRO**

## **Infusing Spirituality Into The Home (Part Two)**

SELECTED DRASHAS FROM  
THE AUTHOR OF  
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## Infusing Spirituality Into The Home (Part Two)

דע אט משפחתך 009 סוף בית יהודי חושי

### The Husband's Responsibility

We are discussing how one can build a *bayis ne'eman b'Yisrael* (a faithful Jewish home). We hope here to explain the matter, with Hashem's help, and then conclude the topic, explaining its fundamental roots.

Adam HaRishon, after the sin, separated from Chavah for 130 years. Why did he separate from her for 130 years? *Chazal* say "*nashim daatan kallab*" – the minds of women are 'light-headed'. Ever since Chavah listened to the Snake and ate from the *Eitz HaDaas*, a woman's power of *daas* (comprehension) has become '*kal*', "lightened" [impaired]. The word *kal* is equal in Hebrew in numerical value to the number 130. Thus, Adam separated from Chavah for 130 years.

Elsewhere, *Chazal* also state that "One who has taught his daughter Torah has taught her foolishness".<sup>1</sup> These two statements of *Chazal* are interrelated. Because a woman does not possess the full level of *daas*, she is not able to get to the holy kind of *daas* which is capable of plumbing to the Torah's depths.

In the previous chapter, we mentioned that a woman in the home needs spirituality in her own life as part of the equation in building a successful home. There is a difficulty involved in this: a woman does not possess the power of mature *daas*. The husband must therefore provide her with *daas*, as it is he who learns the Torah and nurtures holy *daas* from there.

### What Kinds of Divrei Torah Should You Tell Your Wife?

A married woman spends her time in the home, while her [*kolel*] husband spends his day in the *beis*

*midrash*. Ideally, the husband must be able draw forth his *chiyus* (vitality) from there and be able to bring it into the home.

But what usually happens? You can have a *kolel avreich* [young married *kolel* man] who learns *Gemara b'iyun* (in-depth) and he can even learn *halachah* too, yet he may not be clear in how to actually live and go about life.

What will happen? He comes home and tells his wife about an argument between Abaye and Rava he is learning about; and how the *Rashba* and *Ritva* differ, and how the *Beis Yosef* decides...

What, indeed, should a husband tell over to his wife?

And by the Shabbos table, for example, what should he tell her? Today, there are many *sefarim* that make it easier to say a *Dvar Torah* by the Shabbos table, in all different ranges: light, heavy, stories, parables, whatever you want. The husband washes and breaks the *challah*, has his fish and salad, and it's as if his next "portion" of the meal is to tell her a *Dvar Torah* on the *parasha*...

And how much time does it take? He says it to her while he's eating the salad and fish. He considers it to be like a part of the meal, but not more than that. *Baruch Hashem* he says *Divrei Torah* by a meal. He's not saying anything forbidden. *Baruch Hashem*, he merits to sit and learn Torah all day, so he tells over to her what he learns. Maybe he wants her to be smart, so he tells her a piece from *sefer Ketzos HaChoshen*. He realizes that she doesn't understand what he's saying, so what does he tell her then...?

If he feels the house can use some inspiration, he learns *Shemiras HaLashon* with her, and if that doesn't work, he says *Shir HaShirim* with her every day, and if that doesn't work, he adds on saying *Perek Shirah* to the list....

But what is the point of all of this?? The *Dvar Torah* the husband says at the Shabbos table – what is it about? Our body is sustained through the food we eat. How will a husband feed his wife’s soul needs if he does not infuse the home with a spiritual atmosphere? **A husband must know how to bring it in to the house!** To do this, he should clarify with himself that life must be spiritual, and then he must clarify that learning *Gemara* alone is not enough to keep him spiritually sustained.

If a person only gets spirituality from his learning, the home might gain from this a little, but it won’t be enough for the home so survive spiritually.

Each person needs to sit with himself and clarify to himself, “From what do I get *chiyus* (vitality) from in my life?”

A person might answer to this: “What do you mean? I do everything I’m supposed to do. I learn Torah and do the mitzvos.” (If only).” But even if a person would do everything he’s supposed to do, the issue is: from where does he get his actual vitality from? It’s a totally different question.

One who lives life superficially might learn Torah and do mitzvos, but that won’t be enough. One has to know where he gets vitality from in spirituality. Just because a person is learning doesn’t mean he gets vitality from it. (He knows that his father got vitality from learning, so also thinks that he gets vitality from it).

If a person doesn’t feel vitality from his *ruchniyus*, it’s not possible to have true Jewish home. You can’t live in a place where you don’t get *chiyus* from. So the issue is not what you do, but from where you get your vitality from.

If a person thinks that he gets all his vitality from just learning *Gemara*, he is mistaken. Some have a hard time accepting this fact, but it’s the truth. One who gets all his vitality from his learning really has no vitality. As *Chazal* say (Yevamos 109a), “Whoever says “I have nothing except Torah”, even the Torah he doesn’t have”. Learning *Gemara* alone will not be enough to bring spirituality into the home.

One must first clarify where he gets vitality from, and then he must wonder how he can bring it into the home, so that the home can be infused with an inner kind of life.

### *Live What You Know*

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In today’s times, there are many Torah scholars when it comes to learning *Gemara*, but when it comes to spiritual matters, which are called matters of “*Hilchos De’os*” (knowing how to live life), it is often the wife who is more in touch with these matters than her husband. Girls today go to seminaries, in Israel and in other places, in which they are immersed in internal matters of Avodas Hashem; they often find themselves disappointed when they get married, even if they marry a *Talmid Chochom* (Torah scholar), because they find that when it comes to spiritual matters, they usually know more than their husbands do.

There are even husbands who do not know what to do when it comes to certain issues about life, so he consults with a *Rebbetzin* who will guide him in matters of the home. If the child has a question in his homework, he tells him to go ask the *Rebbetzin*.... This is really not the way it should be. Husbands are supposed to know more than their wives when it comes to spiritual matters as well.

This week I met a *bochur* in *yeshivah* and I told him that I am giving a *shiur* this week on *sefer Derech Hashem* (Way of G-d, by Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzato, a *sefer* which discusses the structure of Judaism). He asked me, “What’s that?” He never heard of *sefer Sefer Derech Hashem!*

A *bochur* can know well the *chiddushim* of the *Ketzos HaChoshen*, Reb Shimon Shkop, Reb Chaim, *Avi Ezri* - even *sefer Ayeles HaShachar* he knows - but when asked about *Sefer Derech Hashem*, he didn’t know, he has to go look in the yeshiva library to find it! He only knows about the *sefarim* on the shelf in yeshiva, such as *Shaarei Teshuvah* and *Orchos Tzaddikim*, but that’s it.

Without going through the important *sefarim* that explain our fundamentals of Torah life, it’s not possible for a person to live a true and inner life.

Just like a person can't learn *Hilchos Shabbos* or hope to fulfill it if he doesn't learn *Mishna Berurah*, so too it's not possible for a person to live life correctly if he never learned several times *sefer Mesilas Yeshtarim*, *Derech Hashem*, *Chovos HaLevovos*, *Sefer Nefesh HaChaim Shaar Daled* (and all that is the minimum). One has to go through these *sefarim* well.

If one is not clear about *hashkafah* (Jewish ideals) with himself, he can't become an angel when he comes home. There is no such thing. He lives all day in *sugyos* of *Gemara*, and he cannot impart this into the home. It doesn't give an inner life into the home.

So every person needs to learn the important *sefarim*, and build his *Hilchos De'os* (Jewish ideals) from them. His life must reflect what he learns. It is not about knowing them, but to live them. There must be a map to live life. The outer parts of our life have a map: *halachah* (Jewish law). The inner parts of life have a map too: the *sefarim* that discuss *hashkafah* (Jewish ideals).

We must first see what we are missing with this. It is not enough just to be observant, nor is it enough if a person knows that he lives in order to do Hashem's will, learn the Torah, keep it. That is not enough! People wonder what is missing from such a life. But it's a question if there's anything there at all! A Jewish home is actively full of vitality and spirituality. An inner life needs to be learned, it needs to have clarity, and then one can live it. We can't just live with actions and with what we learn. We must live an inner life. If one has an inner life within himself and he brings it into the home too, it can begin a true kind of life. A Jewish home is for one to bring spirituality into the home. That is the air that must permeate the home. Surely there are also chores to be done in the home, but the *ruach* (atmosphere) of the home must be constant and alive.

I hope you are slowly realizing here that there is another kind of life we can live. These are not ideas or inspiration. It is to build a whole different kind of life, an inner life!

Man and women are different, and they are always different. But the common denominator

between them is that their life should be an inner life.

### ***Exercises To Think About***

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Let's ask a simple question:

Does a person ever think once a day why he is Jewish? *Chazal* say that "one who denies idol worship is called a Jew". That is something to think about when you contemplate what it means to be a Jew.

We need to infuse spirituality into our children as well; we will give an example. Let's say it is Purim, and you want to teach your children what Purim is about, how they can be affected by Purim. You can ask them the following: "What are people doing in Gan Eden on this day?" Think about what they are doing on Purim in Gan Eden! (If a person don't care about what's going on in Gan Eden, that shows how far he is from a true life, because the way of life in Gan Eden shows you how true life should look like.) What's going on in Gan Eden on Purim? They are sending *mishloach manos* to each other? They are reading *Megillah*?

*Chazal* say that there are ten expression of *simcha* (joy). So in Gan Eden, new depth to *simcha* keeps being revealed. If one isn't revealing it, he is in Gehinnom! In Gan Eden, there are always new revelations.

The Purim of 5773 is really a totally different Purim than 5772, from a spiritual viewpoint. But with most people, Purim in 5773 is the same Purim as it was in 5772 and in the year before it...

We are comprised of a body and soul, as we live here on this world. Therefore our body misleads us on this world and tricks us from the true reality. In Gan Eden, there is only a soul – the body cannot mislead us there. When the month of Adar comes in Gan Eden, the souls are receiving new depth to Adar and Purim. That is the perspective we need to have to.

What happens when it comes the month of Adar? People are trying new ideas and tricks. Where does this come from? Does it come from Judaism?!

Our *simcha* must not be superficial. When people live superficially, they think they have to do all kinds of funny things during the month of Adar, and they think that this is the will of Hashem and the way of the Torah!

Let's talk very practically now. How would you like to have a real *simcha* this year when it comes the month of Adar? How can you make your family happy? People react to this sheepishly: "What do you want from me? I don't know how to be happy myself. How am I supposed to be happier during the month of Adar?" Instead, people are worrying about the monetary expenses he will have to make for Purim this year...

What is the *simcha* you need to have in Adar? How do you plan to improve your home? You learn Torah, *Baruch Hashem*, but how does your home look? How is the atmosphere there – is it happier during the month Adar? Did anything change since last Adar?

The husband does not have *simcha*; he may know how to learn *Gemara* well, but he doesn't have real and deep *simcha*, he doesn't know what it is. How will his wife be happy? What should she do with her herself - draw pictures of Haman and come up with new ideas this year for Purim? And how will the children be happy? If both the father and mother are not happy in Adar, neither will the children be. They are both busy with various ideas for Purim, borrowing costumes from *gemachim* and wondering who they will send *mishloach manos* to this year, and what theme it will be, and they are both caught up in these superficial kinds of preparations.

The father does not know how to have *simcha*, and the wife is busy enabling her husband to learn Torah, *Baruch Hashem*, and raising the children – so she has no time to develop her happiness. So between the two of them, there is no *simcha* entering the home; neither of them knows what it is or how to develop it. What does the wife remain with from Adar and Purim? Various presents. When it comes Purim, the parents get their happiness from how the children look and how they are acting so funny.

Anyone who lives a more internal kind of life is actually pained from the Purim that we see today. The Purim we see in our times is devoid of inner happiness, and it has become a day of superficial entertainment. It is painful to watch it take place, for anyone who lives a more internal kind of life.

What do people do to attain more *simcha* in Adar? Are people trying to make their homes happier during Adar? If not, how can we call this a true Jewish home, when the atmosphere in it is not deeply meaningful and spiritual? If a wife wonders how there is more *simcha* in Adar, and she asks her husband about this, what can he answer her?

Ask yourself this question: What should you answer your wife when she asks you this question? One should really know what to answer her about this, just as much as when she asks him what the *halacha* is about something in the kitchen.

How can it be that so many people do not know how to practically carry out the words of *Chazal*, who said that there is more *simcha* in Adar? Furthermore, what is the difference between how a Chareidi Jew acts on Purim with how a secular person acts? Because we send *matanos l'evyonim* and we eat a *seudah*? Can we tell a difference? Sadly, there isn't that much of a difference we can recognize, in today's times.

People are asking about how they can make their children feel the happiness of Purim, while the parents themselves don't know how to get to the real, inner happiness of Purim. It is because people are usually used to living superficially. There is no way that real *simcha* will enter the home when they are not living a spiritual kind of life from beforehand. It doesn't suddenly appear during Adar. Yet people wonder why it isn't happening in their homes.

### ***Outline of The Solution***

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Now we will focus on a positive point.

If a person wants to live a true kind of life, he needs to know how to infuse spirituality and the meaning of Judaism into the home. One firsts need

to uncover depth to matters of Judaism within himself - and then he can then impart that knowledge to your children.

### **“Saying” A D’var Torah Vs. Living It**

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For example, what kind of *Dvar Torah* should you say to your children on Purim? Will you say a piece from *sefer Manos HaLevi*...? Say something to them that you relate to deeply in yourself, something profound which you connect with. That is what you should convey to them. Give over to your family a deep understanding of something that you have reached within yourself.

Here is an example. Last week was *Parashas Yisro*, which talks about the giving of the Torah. What kind of *Dvar Torah* should one say to his family? To say over a question about what the order of the Ten Commandments was, and just say an answer? Question, answer?

It’s more important to give over the essence of the *parsha*. You can instead say to them, “How did standing at *Har Sinai* look like? How did everyone prepare? How did they feel?”

I asked this question to my children. My youngest child said: “They went to get new, white clothing.” An older child said, “They went to the *mikveh*.” My oldest child, who is already a *bar daas*, said, “They did earnest *teshuvah*.”

That is a real *Dvar Torah*: to give over a life of Torah. Surely every *Dvar Torah* you say is true and makes sense, but what is the kind of *Dvar Torah* that you really should you say to your children? The child often reads off the *Divrei Torah* from his papers he comes home with, like a *baal korei*. Is this the Torah that is alive, or is it just nice ideas? Is it just about ‘saying a *Dvar Torah* at the Shabbos table’? A *Dvar Torah* we say at the Shabbos table has to be alive!

Here is another example. You can simply ask questions that train your children to think. This week is *Parashas Mishpatim*, which speaks about the laws of slavery. If a man owes money and he has no

money and no items to sell, he may sell his daughter up until a certain age, in order to pay back a loan. Here is what you can ask your children: “If such a thing would happen to you, what would be the first thing you would sell?”

A *Dvar Torah* must not be about just saying nice “ideas”. People are often used to saying a *Dvar Torah* for the sake of just saying “nice ideas”. But when you say a *Dvar Torah*, it needs to be something you live by and which others can live by. Similarly, the words of *sefer Derech Hashem* and the *Maharal* are not “ideas.” Their words are concepts to live by, in the practical sense – at least for those who care about their souls and don’t live just with their body.

### **Depth Vs. Simplicity**

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However, another point to mention here is that one cannot either say deep ideas to his wife and children. You can’t even tell her the main lessons you understood from a *shiur*; it cannot be understood. Instead, you have to take the words of what you heard and just say something that can be experienced by another. Take a simple question that makes people think about life in a practical way.

For example, Haman decreed genocide on the generation. Ask your family: “What would you do if you were there? How would you react?”

Hopefully the answer will be “*Teshuvah*.” But there are different understandings to *teshuvah*. The wife will have her own understanding, and each of the children will have their own understanding.

That is how Judaism must be given over to your family! **First** make sure you understand something you are saying and you relate to it deeply and in a real way. **Then**, explain it to your wife in a way she will understand. **Then**, think of how you will explain it to your children.

Without doing this, the home will not gain *ruchniyus*. It will be filled with nice ideas, but it won’t actually affect the family members.

Here is a simple question to ask your family this week: “How do we have more *simcha* during Adar?”

There are all kinds of answers. Each person has his own way of how to increase *simcha*.

The truth is that if we take the average twelve-year old child today and we ask him this question, does his answer come close to the words of *Chazal* at all...? A more mature child will answer that it means to have more *ruchniyus*, but he still won't know what that means, because he only knows about this intellectually – he doesn't act upon that knowledge.

But at least when you act them the question, you can get them to start thinking.

These are practical words for anyone who wants to live differently than the superficial life today. One who wants to live in a true way needs to feel how real the words of Torah and *Chazal* are, and that the words of Torah and *Chazal* build our life.

We see that everyone else around us does not live this way. But in our home, we can have a different kind of life than the way life is on the outside world.

### ***Knowing Why You Are Married***

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We will mention one last point in this discussion.

A husband and wife – each of them - must know what they get married for, and they need to have conversations about this from time to time.

Some will say that they got married for the mitzvah of having children; or to work on their *middos* (that's easy to say when everything is fine and dandy, not when one is really tested), and a third person will say, "To have the *Shechinah*." These are all wonderful answers, but we need to be honest with ourselves.

The husband and wife must know **clearly** why we are living and why we need to be married. The reason should be **clear** to both of them. We might have been clear in the past, but then we forget as time goes on; for this reason, we need to review that reason, again and again. And we need to deepen our understanding in that reason, as time goes on. Upon that, a marriage can thrive.

There are many things we can speak about when it comes to how to have a true Jewish home. There are many, many details that are involved in marriage and in the home. But let's be firm on the basis of all the details. If we are not sure about the basis, then all the details will be scattered to us, and on this *Chazal* say "There is no *kesubah* (marriage document) that has no discord."

There are so many things that come up in marriage: "Why is this part of my marriage not good, and why is that part so hard to deal with?" But the root of the problems is when the basis is missing. The basis is: that the husband and wife must both be clear in the direction they are heading in.

Of course, there will still be certain mistakes and failures that they will always make. But the marriage as a whole will be basically successful when they are each clear for what purpose they are married for.

Astoundingly, there are couples married to each other for many years, who still have no goal that they are living together for. They are not actively striving together towards anything in life. They may do many things together and help each other, but they are just taking life as it comes. They raise the children and marry them off, and that is all that connects them together. After the children are all married, what are the husband and wife left with, now that they have each other again? What connects them together? When the grandchildren come to visit? And after that, when one of the spouses has to escort the other to his/her final resting place...The End...?

My hope here is that you have gotten the main message behind these words. The home must become infused with *neshamah* (Divinity), with a central goal of life to actively aspire for and strive for which can be tangibly felt within the atmosphere within the home - as opposed to just knowing the information of the Torah and the mitzvos.

Torah is called *Toras Chaim*, a 'Torah of life', so it must be life to a person; and the same is true with the mitzvos. If Torah and mitzvos are giving life to the person, that is wonderful; if not, then there is no *ruchniyus* in the home that is connecting the family. What connects the spouses with each other, then?

The various things they have to deal with each day? Helping the children? Making a *bar mitzvah* and preparing him for his *bar mitzvah*, and other preparations, etc.?

One who knows of *ruchniyus* from his own life in this way and gives over that lifestyle to his home, will live a whole different kind of life.

### ***In Conclusion***

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I thank you for listening to me until now; there were listeners here who came in the middle of the series and I wasn't sure if they would be able to listen and understand. I hope that the words have helped at least some of you to gain a different outlook towards life, an inner perspective towards life.

The ways to practically help your marriage are different with each person, because every situation is different. But the common denominator between all of our homes is that we all need in it an atmosphere that leads us to an inner kind of life. Hopefully the words here have been understood, and not viewed as ideas or advice, but as an inner way to live life.

May we all have Heavenly assistance in building our homes.