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## Woman's World - 05 How A Mother Prepares For Rosh Hashanah

### ***Men serve Hashem through their Thoughts, Women serve Hashem through Actions***

A man uses his faculty of thought to serve Hashem, such as by learning Torah. What is the Avodah of a woman?

A woman doesn't use the power of thought to serve Hashem – she mainly uses her actions. A woman mainly is involved in her home, with her husband and children. She nourishes them and provides them with their physical needs. In addition to this, a woman also is involved in *chessed*; we will soon explain what this means.

These are the two main aspects of a woman's *Avodas Hashem*: her home, and her *chessed*.

The home comes first; it is more important than any *chessed*. But, although running the home is her first priority, it is not good either if a woman is only focused on nourishing her family with their physical needs. A woman who wants to improve herself needs to do *chessed* as well with her family; we will explain what we mean.

### ***Part One: Why We Must Do Chessed***

Rav Chaim Volozhiner zt"l wrote in his introduction to *sefer Nefesh HaChaim*, "A person was only created in order to help others." There are people who do a lot of *chessed*, but only because "it's a *mitzvah*." But this is not the purpose of why we do *chessed*. We need to do *chessed* because we were created to help people!

There are many ways to do *chessed*, but the main thing is that we must have a general attitude of always doing *chessed* in our life. When we do *chessed*, are we realizing that we are fulfilling our purpose on this world? It's not mainly about how much *chessed* we do; that is one thing. It is more about what our attitude toward *chessed* is.

### ***A Mother's Role***

A Jewish mother is doing *chessed* all day; all day, all she is concerned about is her family's needs. This indeed is her main *Avodas Hashem*. But she must realize that she is doing all this because of *chessed*, not because she was thrown into these responsibilities. She didn't "happen" to fall into this role.

A woman doesn't learn Torah; her whole life is *chessed*. So *chessed* has to be her whole attitude on life! She does *chessed*, and in this she doesn't need to improve, because it is all she does all day. But she must do it with an awareness. A woman doesn't do *chessed* because she "happens" to fall into this role of being a housewife; it is part of the way Hashem designed creation, and this has to be her attitude on life: My whole *Avodas Hashem* on this world is to do *chessed*.

That is one part of her *Avodah*: knowing why she takes care of her family. She must realize that this is her whole life's mission, not something she "happens" to do due to life circumstances.

### **Part Two: Giving Over Proper Values**

The second part of a woman's *Avodas Hashem* is the actual *chessed* she does. This is not the same thing as before; we will explain what this is.

It is written, "*Do not forsake the Torah of your mother.*" What Torah do we learn from our mothers, if our mothers did not learn Torah? A woman is exempt from learning Torah; what Torah does she give over to her children? Does she learn *Mishnayos* and Gemara with her children?

The "Torah of a mother" is that she gives over to her children the values of life. She doesn't teach her children what to do and what not to do; that is the father's job in *chinuch*. Her job in *chinuch* is to give her how the Torah "smells" – the beautiful fragrance of a Torah lifestyle. She gives over the attitude we must have toward life.

The husband learns Torah, and his role as a father is to teach them right from wrong. But his learning doesn't necessarily give over the proper values to the children; it is the mother who accomplishes this. Why?

When the father goes back to the *Beis Midrash* to learn, it is the mother who remains in the house with the children. They are around her much more than they are around their father. It is she who is giving over the proper values to her children when their father isn't around. She shows her children how to live the Torah lifestyle.

### **How The Mother Teaches Her Children**

In order for a mother to accomplish this, she must practice what she preaches. If she tells her children to live a Torah kind of lifestyle but she herself doesn't keep to her own words, her words will be ineffective on her children. Her words can only penetrate the hearts of her children when they are truthful and come from her heart, when she is an example to them. This is only when she herself lives by the words she says.

This is a woman's role in the home: she brings up her children. This is the real *chessed* that she does in the home. It is not simply that she provides them with their physical needs and nourishes them; her role is to bring them up with the proper values in life, to show them the how fragrant and sweet a Torah lifestyle is.

She teaches them the proper aspirations to have in life. She teaches them to be happy with life, happiness when doing the *mitzvos*, and what to want in life.

In this way, she does *chessed* her whole life, not just by rote, but as something which personifies her very life.

### **In Conclusion**

If Avraham Avinu would have done *chessed* his whole life because simply “it’s a *mitzvah*” to do *chessed*, he wouldn’t have gotten anywhere. It was only because he viewed *chessed* as his whole purpose in life. *Chessed* personified him; it was his whole attitude about life.

This is the kind of *Chessed* we need to have: not that we should do *Chessed* because we **have** to, but because it should be **how we live** our life.

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