

Welcome HOME

a feminine factor - the final frontier

A FARBRENGEN-IN-PRINT



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SPECIAL THANKS TO:

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The Kinus Office
Vaad Hashluchim of the Moshiach Office

A PROJECT OF

The Moshiach Office at Merkos 302
in conjunction with the Kinus Office

Dear Shluchos,

Seldom does the Rebbe explicitly give personal matters cosmic significance. But on Chof-Beis Shevat, 5752, four years after the Rebbetzin was *nistalek*, the Rebbe delivered a *sichah* that would change our perception of this day forever:

Chof-Beis Shevat marks the inception of the last stage in the historical task of completing the *dirah bitachtonim*. This final frontier is distinctly feminine. No mere contributors to the mission, women possess the one component needed to finally finish it once and for all!

As it was in the generation of *Yetziyas Mitzrayim*, so is it in our generation on the threshold of geulah. The *nashim tzidkanios* are imbued with unique characteristics that lead to unique responsibilities in order to finalize the home that Hashem so desires. The future is literally in their hands!

What is this feminine factor? It is the touch of beauty, the infusion of warmth and the environment of love and positivity that makes Yiddishkeit extra special and the world around us a genuine *geulah'dik* milieu. The focus is on a personal investment in beautifying their mitzvos and their homes.

The finishing touches of women transform this home (*dirah*), so painstakingly constructed over the generations, into a **welcoming** home (*dirah na'ah*); what **we** have created becomes **His**; a residence *buttel* to Hashem's presence is one where Hashem's Essence (*Atzmus*) is completely "comfortable" and integrated.

This Farbrengen-in-Print features six shluchos who elaborate on some of the key aspects of this landmark *sichah*. Together, we will farbreng about our unique stage in history and its ramifications, the mandate to create a beautiful and welcoming home, the specialty of the Rebbetzin in this regard, the distinct feminine elements that serve as the basis of *chinuch* and the special power of the mitzvah of *Neshek*.

Together, we will contemplate and integrate the importance of the woman's role in our times, focus on beautifying the homes we build and personally investing ourselves in the programs we create—empowering ourselves and leading our generation to usher in the geulah!

The Editors

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GEULA GNIWISCH

22 Shevat 5752

...The advantage of Jewish women and girls with regard to the creation of the *dirah betachtonim* (the unification of ten and eleven) can be understood with an additional explanation to the previous discussion regarding the Divine service of creating the *dirah betachtonim* [in general].

Since our Sages use the terminology of *dirah betachtonim*, a home in this lowly world, it means that we can understand its qualities via a comparison to a dwelling of a physical person, (which is a physical manifestation of a dwelling for Hashem).

We can readily observe that although a home can consist of any space that is habitable by humans, a home is complete when it is a beautiful house with beautiful furnishings. This is demonstrated by the teaching of our Sages, “Three things broaden the mind of the person: a beautiful house, a beautiful wife, and beautiful furnishings.”

This indicates that a physical home has two aspects: 1) The house is totally subordinate to the person who resides there. All of the (working) aspects of the house are for the resident’s utility and that defines their entire existence. 2) The beauty of the house influences the resident, broadening their mind.

We observe in any house or its furnishings, that its beauty and elegance—both physical and spiritual—are dependent on the woman who is the “foundation of the home”. As is well-known, the concept of beauty (and the potential to make things beautiful) is uniquely connected to women (as is demonstrated by the statements), “A beautiful woman”, (and also) “a beautiful and gracious bride”, to the point that we say: “A wife is only for beauty”, which refers to spiritual beauty that also manifests as physical beauty.

We can even suggest that this primary role of women in decorating a house is a development by means of spiritual descent from how things work in the Divine service of creating the *dirah betachtonim*. In this service, a fundamental aspect is dependent on Jewish women and girls, that the *dirah* should be a “beautiful house” with “beautiful furnishings”.

—Free Translation

די מעלה פון נשי ובנות ישראל אין דער עבודה פון מאכן א דירה לוי תבנית בתחתונים (די התאחדות פון עשר און אחד עשר) וועט מען פארשטיין בהקדים א תוספת ביאור אין דעם וואס עס האט זיך פריער געקענט וועגן דער עבודה פון מאכן א דירה בתחתונים:

וויבאלד אז חז"ל נוצן דעם לשון "דירה בתחתונים", איז פארשטאנדיק אז מ'קען פארשטיין דער תוכן דערפון דורך פארגלייכן דאס צו דירת האדם למטה [וועלכע ווערט נשתלשל פון ענין הדירה למעלה].

מ'זעט בפשטות אז אף על פי וואס א דירה קען באשטיין בלויז פון א מקום מסוים וואס איז מוכשר לדירת האדם, איז אבער שלימות הדירה – בשעת דאס איז א דירה נאה מיט פלים נאים, ביז אז "שלימה מרחיבין דעתו של אדם, אלו הן, דירה נאה ואשה נאה וכלים נאים".

דאס הייסט, אז אין א דירה בפשטות זיינען פאראן צוויי ענינים: (א) א דירה איז אינגאנצן בטל צו דער בעל הדירה וואס לעבט אין איר. אלע פרטים פון דירה (פדבועי) זיינען אים משמש, און אין דעם באשטייט זייער גאנצע מציאות.

(ב) די דירה נאה איז מרחיב דעתו של אדם...

מ'זעט בפועל אין א דירה בפשטות, אז דער עיקר נוי ויופי הדירה והפלים – הן בגשמיות והן ברוחניות – איז תלוי אין דער אשה, "עקרת הבית". וכנודע אז דער ענין פון נאה (און דער פח צו אויפטאן נאה) איז דא במיוחד ביי אן אשה – "אשה נאה", "פלה נאה וחסודה". ביז אז "אין האשה אלא ליופי" – יופי ברוחניות וואס דערפון ווערט נשתלשל אין יופי בגשמיות.

ניש לומר אז דאס ווערט נשתלשל דערפון וואס אזוי איז דאס אויך אין דער עבודה פון מאכן א "דירה בתחתונים", אז אין נשי ובנות ישראל איז תלוי א חלק עיקרי פון דער עבודה צו מאכן אז די דירה זאל זיין א "דירה נאה" מיט "פלים נאים".

(סעיפים יב, יד)





Inner Vitality & Encompassing Scent

THE REBBETZIN'S NAME EPITOMIZES THE SPECIAL ROLE OF WOMEN

— Written by: —

SARA BRAFMAN

Shluchah to Morristown, New Jersey

Picture the following scene...

A new family has just moved into town and Chanie invites them to the Shabbos meal. Friday night arrives, and she warmly welcomes her guests inside her home with a heartfelt smile. Shabbos candles cast their glow over a white lace tablecloth set with gold-rimmed dishes and crystal glassware. There is a palpable aura of serenity, a vibe of holiness and beauty that fills the room.

The guests can surely sense it.

Few words have been exchanged and mere minutes have passed. Yet the aura of the *Akeres Habayis* and her home are unmistakably present, accessible. She has not said or done.

She simply... **is**.

Her home simply... **is**.

The ability to create this spiritual energy is unique to the Jewish woman. It is the “pleasant fragrance” of the home. Fused by the beauty of both the physical and the spiritual realms, Chanie’s home is transformed from a

house to a *Mikdash Me’at*.

This is a description of *makif* as elaborated in Chassidus. Let us now transition from **being**, to **expression**:

The Shabbos meal begins. Mendy recites Kiddush and everyone washes their hands for *hamotzi*. The boys join Tatty in singing *zemiros* and every school-aged child has *divrei Torah* to share. Chanie and Mendy scrupulously adhere to *hilchos Shabbos* and carefully explain what they do to the guests. The level of *yiras Shomayim* imparted to both their own children and the new neighbors is visceral and vibrant!

Both Mendy and Chanie are involved in the *doing*. And, yes, while each has their vital, indispensable role, hers is unique. She is the *Akeres Habayis* — spiritually sensitive by nature, the “crown of his head.” With gentle conversation and encouragement, she imparts her innate knowledge. Intuitively, Chanie’s mind and heart collaborate to carry out her task, infusing her family and home with

warmth, energy and vibrancy!

This is the concept of *chayus pnimi* as elaborated in Chassidus.

Makif and *p’nimi* can complement each other and work synergistically. The Rebbetzin’s name, Chaya Mushka, represents both concepts:

Chaya refers to the inner vitality that enlivens the body.

Mushka, a type of scent, refers to the encompassing aspect of the soul, for smell is that which surrounds us.

The Rebbetzin epitomized the



אז די צוויי ענגנים זיינען מרומז אין די צוויי נעמען "חיה מושקא": "חיה" גייט (בעיקר) אויף די חיות פנימי, וועלכע באלעבט דעם גוף בדרך התלבשות פנימית. און "מושקא" ... גייט אויף מקיף הנשמה, פידוע אז ריח איז אן עגן של מקיף...

ועל דרך זה אויך אין רוחניות הענגנים – איז א "דירה נאה" תלוי אין דעם אז עס זאל זיין סיי די עבודה פון "חיה" – די חיות פנימי און כחות פנימיים, און סיי די עבודה פון "מושקא" – די כחות המקיפים, ביז יחידה שבנפש, דער עגן פון תענוג (נאה). (אות ט)

These two dimensions (the encompassing and internal qualities of the neshamah) are hinted to in the two names, **Chaya** and **Mushka**: **Chaya** refers to the inner vitality which enlivens the body. **Mushka**, a type of scent, refers to the encompassing aspect of the soul, for smell is an encompassing thing...

It is similar in the spiritual realm, for Hashem's spiritual Home to be made **beautiful** it is necessary to have both the service of **Chaya**—the introduction of liveliness by our internal spiritual abilities, and the service of **Mushka**, the introduction of pleasure and beauty by our transcendent spiritual abilities, extending to the *yechidah* (the essence of the soul).

synergy of these concepts not only in name but in action as well.

Anyone privileged to visit the Rebbetzin in her home describe her regal bearing and gentle demeanor; her refinement of character and deep sensitivity. You knew that you were unquestionably in the presence of royalty. Like a pleasant fragrance, her nobility simply filled the room.


At the same time, the Rebbetzin was a woman of deeds. In her unassuming way, the Rebbetzin was there to lend an ear to support, advise

“THERE IS A PALPABLE AURA OF SERENITY, A VIBE OF HOLINESS AND BEAUTY THAT FILLS THE ROOM.”

and encourage. Above all, the Rebbetzin watched over the Rebbe's health and took the steps needed to protect it.

This fusion also categorizes the role of the woman in the finalization of *dirah bitachtonim*. Both aspects contribute to the welcoming atmosphere we are charged to create for Hashem's home.

May Hashem bless each of us,

shluchos of the Rebbe, with the wisdom to emulate our Rebbetzin by truly incorporating and internalizing the combined energy of **being** and **expressing** ourselves in every aspect of our work. And in so doing, we will upgrade this world into Hashem's beautiful home, ushering in the *geulah ha'amitis v'hashleimah!* 





Solid Setting

THE FEMININE APPROACH TO CHINUCH IS ITS VERY FOUNDATION

— Written by: —

CHANALE CHAITON

Shlucha to Robinsville/Hamilton, New Jersey

“So... what do you do?”

I hear this question often from the mothers in my community.

My instinct is to exclaim, “What do I NOT do?!”

In the privacy of my home, in the quiet of the night and removed from others, I contemplate this idea.

It certainly would be beneficial if I could find a way to articulate my unique contribution as it was taught to us by the Rebbe.

We have long moved past the time when the outlook toward women’s accomplishments is that they deserve

a pat on the back for allowing their husbands to fulfill their *tafkid* in this world.

This in itself is tremendous progress.

But I know there is something deeper that I need to convey.

It is no secret that the Rebbe’s approach and focus on the woman’s role is revolutionary. And taking into account the special *tekufah* we live in, it is a demanding and crucial position we hold for the future of Yiddishkeit.

The Rebbe encourages us to find that secret of our inner essence.

A pivotal aspect of our unique shlichus is to embrace our role as nurturers. We are nurturers to our community, students and most importantly our children. There are myriad tasks that apply to this ‘description’, but first we must appreciate what lies behind it.

Whatever age, stage or specific needs we are dealing with, we start by setting the tone in an unconditionally loving manner. This is second nature to us when it comes to younger kids, but it is important that we don’t let it stop. Even when *chinuch* begins taking on

דאס הייסט, אז נוסף אויף דעם וואס די קינדער זאלן זיין עוסקי תורה ומצוות על דרך הרגיל, גיט אין זיי אריין די מוטער דעם געשמאק און ווארעמקייט (מיט דער איידלקייט און ליבשאפט וואס איז דא במיוחד אין דער נאטור פון נשי ובנות ישראל) אז דער עסק בתורה ומצוות זאל זיין באופן נאה וטוב...

וואס דאס ווארצלט אין אין דעם קינד – אויך אויף ווען ער וואקסט אויס ("גם פי זקין לא יסור ממונו") – א טיפע ליבשאפט און טייערקייט צו אלע ענינים פון תורה און מצוות. (אות י"ד)

This means: in addition to the children being dedicated to Torah in the usual manner, the mother instills within them the enjoyment and warmth (with the grace and love that is the unique nature of Jewish women and girls) which causes the dedication to Torah and mitzvos to be beautiful and positive...

This instills within the child a deep love and reverence for all aspects of Torah and mitzvos— affecting them even when they mature (as is indicated by the statement, “Also when he grows old, he will not stray from it.”)



a more mature, intellectual angle, the warm environment remains key.

Each day, as I open up the door after a long day of Chabad work to my children coming home from school, I try to remind myself of this.

At this moment of my motherhood, I understand that the nature of my greeting will unerringly affect the mood of all those hours of playing, dinner, homework, and bedtime that follow. And as I gaze into their future, I recognize that my personal investment will translate into better outcomes from any task that my family needs from me.

"MY INSTINCT IS TO EXCLAIM, 'WHAT DO I NOT DO?!'"

The details and *hanhagos* of living as a Chossid are vast and all encompassing, but at the heart of it all is *hiskashrus*—a deep connection and commitment to our Rebbe.

Similarly, it is when our children sense our warmth, when our guidance is sincerely and gently focused on what they need, will they accept our direction for learning and growing.

This is not something I can measure by time or with checked-off

items on a list, it is a mindset and outlook regardless of the specifics of my lifestyle at any given moment.

So the answer to “What do I do”?

I offer gentle direction in any part of your life that is lacking. I give you permission to come as you are, and offer unlimited access to the beauty and meaning of Yiddishkeit and Chassidishkeit. Welcome home. ④

Catch-22

THE UNIQUE, PARADOXICAL AVODAH FOR WOMEN OF THE GEULAH

Written by:

LEAH MOSCOWITZ

Shluchah to Wimbledon, UK

Sometimes, I sing the famous Avraham Fried song, “No Jew will be left behind,” with a twist. It goes, “No part of me will be left behind.. No, no, no...”

Yes, even personal, particular, and seemingly petty likes and dislikes play a major role in creating the ultimate *dirah* for Hashem.

Why?

Everyone knows that what always made a Chossid different is *avodah p'nimis*, their love, reverence and commitment to Torah and mitzvos. As the Alter Rebbe describes in Tanya, this is the investment of *ahavah* and *yirah* to complement the mitzvos and fuel them to rise upward.

This classic view of *ahavah* and *yirah* is that there are two separate entities: Hashem's desire to have a *dirah betachtonim*, and me as an individual who completes this task. I lend myself—my *ahavah* and *yirah*—to be aligned with His will, so that I can enjoy doing the *avodah*, and feel motivated to do more.

But there is also another way of doing our *avodah*. A second and very different way to invest our emotions and inner selves into our Torah and mitzvos.

We can understand both by way of some numerology. In the *sichah* of Chof-Beis Shvat, 5752, the Rebbe provides this code to understanding

them: **Ten** refers to the self, the *tachtonim*—ten being the basic number used in creation. **Eleven** refers to the transcendent, Hashem's desire—it is one above the mundane.

In terms of *avodah*, our first model mentioned earlier can be dubbed the **eleven-into-ten** mode. Hashem (eleven) wants my investment (ten), but they each remain in their original state of existence.

Then there is the inverse **ten-into-eleven** mode. In this instance, *ahavah* and *yirah* are not just entities that complement my deeds, but are included as two of the 248 positive mitzvos—the actual building blocks of the *dirah betachtonim*. They are no longer an extra investment, for they are mitzvos in their own right. My self-investment is part and parcel of what I do to make Hashem's will happen. Here, the “me” (ten) ceases to be an individual entity and is completely subsumed into Hashem's desire (eleven)!

But in our unique time, a new stage in anticipating the Geulah, both ten and eleven give way to a whole new level, **twenty-two**—comprised of a ten, an eleven and the transcendent One that unites them. And on this level, “no part of me will be left behind.” My self retains its full identity and can yet still unify with Hashem's desire as one entity. We can have it both ways!

How?

When I cook food for Shabbos that I myself enjoy, when I post a *dvar Torah* online with my usual chit-chat and signature style, and when I take my time getting the shaitel I love, I'm not just using any particular *koach* I have to serve another purpose, rather my unique flavor is the purpose. Hashem likes and wants me and the way I do things.



שְׁלִימוֹת הַחִיבוּר וְהַיְחוד פּוֹן "עֶשֶׂר" (מִצַּד עֵינָנוּ הוּא) אֹן "אַחַד עֶשֶׂר" (מִצַּד עֵינָנוּ הוּא), אַז תַּחְתּוֹנִים מִצַּד עֵינָנָם הֵם וְעֵרָן אַ דִּירָה לֹּ יִתְבָּרַךְ, לְעֶצְמוֹתוֹ יִתְבָּרַךְ. צוֹזְאָמֶען דְּעֶרְמִיט וּנְאָס דָּאָס אִיז אַ דִּירָה לֹּ יִתְבָּרַךְ (אַפֶּעֶר נֶאָךְ אֶלֶץ אַ בְּאִזּוֹנְדֶער זֶאךְ כְּבִיכּוֹל פּוֹן דְּעֵם דִּיר עֶצְמוֹ, בְּלִיבְנִדִיק בְּדִרְגָּת עֶשֶׂר בְּאִזּוֹנְדֶער פּוֹן אַחַד עֶשֶׂר) – וְעֶרְט דִּי דִירָה בְּתַחְתּוֹנִים אִיין זֶאךְ מִיט דְּעֵם דִּיר, וּבְלִשׁוֹן הַיְדוּעַ: דְּעֶר יֵשׁ הַנְּבִרָא אִיז (אִיין זֶאךְ מִיט דְּעֵם) יֵשׁ הָאֲמִיטִי. (אֹרַח ז)

(The third stage is represented by) the complete fusion of **ten** (as it is on its own) and **eleven** (as it is on its own)— i.e. when the lowest realms, as they are on their own, become a dwelling for Hashem's Essence. Yet at the same time that it becomes a dwelling for **Him** (and thus remains a distinct entity from the Resident Himself, a level of ten that is separate from eleven), the dwelling below also becomes one with the Resident. To use the well-known expression: 'the *yesh* of Creation is (one entity with) the *yesh ha'amiti* [Hashem Himself].

He desires "me". My emotions (*ahavah* and *yirah*), my talents, my special touch... Not just because they are used as ways to connect with Him, but simply because they are me. He wants **me**.

"HE DESIRES "ME". MY EMOTIONS, MY TALENTS, MY SPECIAL TOUCH..."

Have you noticed how women often have this gift of allowing others space to be their unique selves? It starts in the womb, as each child is nurtured to grow in a very specific way and continues as we raise children through focusing and celebrating the personality and beauty of each individual child. We like to encourage our husbands to build on their special strengths and we try not to tell friends what to do, rather ask them what they think.

That is why women are the most in tune with this twenty-two mode, where including our human selves just the way we are is part of the actual plan. Our feminine touch in everything we do and in celebrating who we are, whether in *ruchnius* or *gashmius*, is actually the whole point.

The Rebbe is showing us the ultimate truth of *ein od milvado*—there is nothing besides Hashem. The Rebbe posits insight in an interesting footnote in the *sichah*: we aren't using the terminology "*ein od*" which would mean there is absolutely no other, rather "*ein od milvado*" meaning there is no other **outside** of him—but with him there is an "other"! That "other" is me,

but not the "me" that stands distinct from Him, rather the "me" that He desires so much. I stand, as I am, not subsumed, but as one with Him.

When we contemplate this idea, our desire for *geulah* becomes as strong as our natural desire and love for ourselves. We realize that it isn't something we need to create anew, it is something we already want!

The Rebbe begged us to open our eyes and realize that there is no magic falling from the sky when it comes to the *Geulah*. We must recognize that we already stand in a new stage where *geulah* is available to us now. We have the full opportunity to impact our own personal lives and the entire world for good without limit. Through our performance of Torah and mitzvos (Hashem's desire in each moment) with personal care and investment, we affect reality immutably to the point that even one mitzvah done in this spirit can affect the heart of every Jew. 4

A note of thanks for the recorded shiurim of Rabbi N. Shtroks, which aided me in the development of this article. —L.M.



A Starting Spark

THE POWER OF A LITTLE FLAME TO
INFUSE HOME AND FAMILY WITH
BEAUTY AND LIGHT

— Written by: —

CHANI MATUSOF

Shlucha to Monaco

Mivtza Neshek isn't new to us. But in the *sichah* of Chof-Beis Shvat 5752, the Rebbe frames this mitzvah in a whole new light, as the cornerstone to crafting a *dirah na'ah* for Hashem. How does one small flame have so much power?

I learned it from my dear grandmother, Mrs. Esther Sternberg *shetichye*, who has the immense *zechus* of having been appointed by the Rebbe as director of the International Neshek Campaign.

Late one Friday afternoon, in the early years of the campaign, Rabbi Binyomin Klein called my grandmother. He asked her to ensure that a particular woman living on Ocean Avenue in Brooklyn would have the opportunity to light the Shabbos candles on that very same day. With only forty-five minutes to Shabbos, my grandmother quickly took two of her daughters and sped off

to that woman's apartment. She gave the woman the candleholders but couldn't help wondering why the woman, who seemed so eager and committed to light, hadn't done so beforehand.

The woman showed her a candelabra that was placed on top of her cabinets, too high to reach. Explaining that she had just moved into her new apartment and someone had placed the candelabra there, she added that her children were either too busy or didn't care enough to come visit and help her out. That's why she had written to the Rebbe asking him to send her new candlesticks so she can *bentch licht!* One of my grandmother's daughters climbed up and brought down the woman's candlesticks. Thanks to the Rebbe's concern, this woman was able to light candles that very Friday and the subsequent weeks.

A Rashi on *Parshas Terumah*

explains that after getting the instruction to craft the Menorah for the *Mishkan*, Moshe couldn't actually visualize what the Menorah should look like, so Hashem showed him a menorah made of fire. But he was still having a difficult time, so Hashem instructed Moshe to throw the whole chunk of gold into a fire and the Menorah, fully formed, emerged.

The Rebbe explains what was puzzling Moshe, even after being shown the full design of the Menorah, formed from fire. Moshe couldn't understand how it was possible for a Yid to light up the entire world with the few candles of the Menorah. And Hashem demonstrated exactly how that can be done: "Throw the gold into the fire, make some effort, and I will do the rest!"

A similar lesson is learned from Basya, Paraoth's daughter, when she

דורך דעם וואס אַ אַידישע פֿרוי און טאכטער צינדט אָן אַ הייליקע ליכט פֿאר שַבֿת ויום טוב מיט אַ בֿרָכָה – בֿרַענגט זי אַרײַן אין שטוב הייליקע ליכטיקייט, וואַרעמקייט און שיינקייט (נאָה), וואס באַלייכט און באַשיינט די גאַנצע שטוב, און אַלע בְּנֵי בֵּית – אויך דעם בעל און די בָּנִים – מיט "גַּר מִצְוָה וְתוֹרָה אור", אַלע עֲנִינִים פֿון תּוֹרָה וּמִצְוֹת. (אות ט"ו)

When a Jewish woman and her daughters kindle a sanctified light with a blessing before Shabbos and Yom Tov, they bring the light of holiness, and its warmth and beauty, into the house, illuminating and beautifying the entire home and all of the household members—including her husband and sons—with the “candle that is a mitzvah and the Torah that is light”, i.e., the light and warmth of all aspects of Torah and mitzvos.

“START THE PROCESS AND HASHEM WILL CARRY YOU FORWARD, EVEN WHEN CANDELABRA SEEMS JUST OUT OF REACH.”

extended her hand to reach the baby basket in the Nile. Even though she was standing farther from the basket than she could possibly reach, she stretched her hand out nonetheless. Miraculously, Hashem extended her hand and she saved the child, who grew up to be Moshe Rabbeinu.

The mitzvah of Neshek has the power to create an environment of beauty and warmth. It is a small act, but it extends farther than we can imagine. This environment of *dirah na'ah*, the feminine enhancements that bring beauty and *lichtikeit* into the home, affects our husband and children by beautifying and lighting up their lives and mitzvos.

Hashem wants us to make an effort to do the starting act of presenting light. Even if we are unable to achieve the full goal, as long as we put in the effort, Hashem will ensure the task is complete.

So to beautify your home and set in motion your personal *dirah na'ah*, light the flame. Stretch out your hand. Start the process and Hashem will carry you forward even when that candelabra seems just out of reach. 🕯

Home Tweet Home

FINDING MY WAY THROUGH THE WORLD OF DOMAINS

Written by:

PESSI STOLIK

Shluchah to New York City

This is a story about a couch.

As a newlywed, I lived in one of those converted apartments that had just two rooms and a kitchen. One of the first items of furniture we purchased as a new couple was a dining table that seats twelve—someone had his priorities straight—which meant no room for a couch. I fashioned a cozy spot with an upholstered foam mattress and throw pillows atop a nook created by a bay window and

radiator cover and called it good.

Then we moved. This apartment had a second bedroom for our growing family, *kein ayin hara*, and an extra alcove off the dining room.

“So, I’m thinking a loveseat and not a full-size couch...” I opened the conversation with my husband along with Sefarim Box Number Sixty-Seven (of ninety-three).

“No couch,” he said.

I started warming to the loveseat idea, wondering about whether it paid to get a full-depth model for maximum

comfort, versus something more bench-like that wouldn’t take up half the floor space on the new area rug. Had I been any version of internet savvy back then in 2004, my Facebook account would have exploded at that point.

But it turns out that my husband was putting his foot down on all above-single-capacity seating. His arguments were valid: with limited space, the extra padding of sofa arms and backs weren’t as minimalistic as my also-favored and economical wicker armchairs; as *shluchim* to a nearby university,

individual lounge chairs would also be much more *tziniusdik* when we host college



מ'זעט בפועל אין א דירה בפשטות, אז דער עיקר נוי ויופי הדירה והכלים – הן בגשמיות והן ברוחניות – איז תלוי אין דער אשה, "עקרת הבית"...

ויש לומר אז דאס ווערט נשתלשל דערפון וואס אזוי איז דאס אויך אין דער עבודה פון מאכן א דירה בתחתונים, אז אין נשי ובנות ישראל איז תלוי א חלק עיקרי פון דער עבודה צו מאכן אז די דירה זאל זיין א דירה נאה מיט כלים נאים". (אות י"ד)

We can observe in any house or its furnishings, that its beauty and elegance—both physical and spiritual—are dependent on the woman who is the **foundation of the home**...

We can even suggest that this primary role of women in decorating a house is a development by means of spiritual descent from how things work in the Divine service of creating the **dirah betachtonim**. In this service, a fundamental aspect is dependent on Jewish women and girls, that the *dirah* should be a **beautiful house** with **beautiful furnishings**.

students. And lastly: Do I really want him falling asleep over his Rambam on the couch every night?

It's a long-standing tradition, I later learned (though not, to his credit, from my husband) that true *Chassidische* homes in the shtetl were not furnished with couches. Is that the end of the story?

The Rebbe speaks about the topic of interior design in 5752 in the famous *sichah* marking the *hillula* of the Rebbetzin. One of the major highlights is a discussion on the particular value of the physical and spiritual adornment of a Yiddishe home by the Jewish woman. This idea is but a microcosmic expression of her true worth in bringing "home" the Geulah, inviting Hashem's Essence into the lowest spheres of existence.

So many times in that pivotal year, the Rebbe emphasized how the world is ready, that changes in political and social structures are harbingers of the New Order of Moshiach. In connection with women specifically, the Rebbe parallels the feminine qualities that bring beauty and light into the physical *dirah* with their unique ability

"DO I REALLY WANT HIM FALLING ASLEEP OVER HIS RAMBAM ON THE COUCH EVERY NIGHT?"

to enhance the symbiosis of Hashem's *Atzmus* with His *dirah bitachtonim*.

Today, in the virtual world of home blogs and insta #love, where an idea's consequence relies on the number of its "likes" and "views" from the peanut gallery, and in a year where a new, bright social platform (TikTok) edged out the search engine monolith (Google) in number of hits, there is a growing niche that we women are uniquely fit to fill.

The same undercurrent that trends this non-professional, creative force in cyberspace has been taking over workplaces that value teamwork over autocracy, and educational institutions that are adopting the Reggio style of student-led curricula. This is a true "from down-up" paradigm that the Rebbe explains is key to the success of our shlichus to bring Moshiach as we act as the most dynamic influencers of Torah and mitzvos.

It's so much more than the woman's

influence when it comes couches and all the other accoutrements of home. It's a special brand of feminine power that impacts the direction of the *chinuch* in our homes, the programs we offer and every tentative click of the daily cursor journey. Am I capable of it? Are you? To quote one of my favorite terms of the blogosphere: "Shop your home". Tap into your latent talent as a girl of the final-golus/first-geulah generation. And don't just take it from this armchair (couch) expert. Learn the *sichah* yourself!

Because, yes, today: our third—and *b'ezras Hashem* forever—home houses a 102-inch-long nubby tweed couch in merlot, with washable and reversible cushions, stretching across the width of our real-deal living room. Though I will admit that on most Friday nights, there is some subtle *Aishes-Chayil* style maneuvering from this writer on the seating arrangements to keep everyone happy. 🍷



It's Mine

FILING AWAY THE FINAL MOMENTS TOWARD GEULAH

— Written by: —

GEULA GNIWISCH

Shluchah to Houston, TX

Moishe called before his flight to say he's on his way, and how he's craving my meatballs and spaghetti if I feel like making it. Of course I feel like making it! Moish, you're finally coming home!

I walk into his room to make sure that everything is ready, so he can be comfortable right away. Zalman made the bed and cleared the floor; Eli's welcome home sign is taped to the door. Everyone's excited for Moish to come home after a full year away.

Ugh.

Someone left a huge unsorted pile (no, mess) of papers on the desk. I'm sure he's going to need the desk while he's home.

"Berel?"

"Mmmm?" his sleepy voice confirms that nothing organized will result from Berel taking care of it now.

"Eli—" I start.

Hmm no, he doesn't know where half of it goes.

I'm sure Zalman or Levi would be more than eager to help out. Maybe too eager. Not a job for them.

Gahh, can I skip it? Pretend I didn't

"IT'S ME. THE FOUNDATION OF MY HOME, CALLER OF THE SHOTS, WITH THE EYE FOR THOSE DETAILS THAT MATTER."

see it? Maybe it'll clean itself up. Hah. He'll be home in twenty minutes; it's now or never.

There is nothing I dislike more than sorting papers.

~

Moishe regales us with the first of what will probably be many stories over the weekend, about the shiurim and the grounds and the *Shabbosim* in the mountains. After the meatball and spaghetti dishes are cleared, we move over to the living room and Moishe goes to the back bedroom to get his backpack so he could show me his cool travel hack.

"Ma?" Berel whispers urgently.

"There's that pile of papers I was gonna go through—"

"There was that pile of papers, Berel. I took care of it, don't worry."

"You took care of it? I'm so sorry I fell asleep or I woulda done it before Moish came and you really don't like going through papers and maybe I should've woken up..."

"There were just twenty minutes till he walked in; *B'hashgacha pratis* I was the only one there, and I was happy to get his room ready for him. Don't worry, Berel, I'm the expert at those last-minute details. All's good."

~

He's about to come home. Everyone has been doing their best to prepare for His entrance. The previous generations set up the bed, made the sign, cleared the area.

Ugh.

There's so much I did, but there's that *one little thing* that I can't be bothered doing.

כולל ועיקר – בזמננו זה, די לעצטע רגעים פאר דער גאולה – צו מעורר זיין זיך און אלע נשי ובנות ישראל וועגן דעם גודל הזכות פון נשי ובנות ישראל צו ברענגען די גאולה האמיתית והשלימה תיכף ומיד ממש, וועלכע קומט "בשכר נשים צדקניות שיש בדור", כנ"ל... (אות י"ז)

This growth primarily includes the present period, the last moments of Exile, enabling each of you to inspire yourselves and all Jewish women and girls regarding the great merit of Jewish women and girls to immediately bring the true and complete Redemption which, as discussed previously, is compliments of the righteous women of that generation (in *Mitzrayim*, of whom the current generation of women are a reincarnation).

And what's-her-name (someone way more inspired than me) did so-and-so. She definitely can do this too, instead of me!

But in the last moments before He comes home, it's now or never.

Even if there is nothing I dislike doing more than *that*.

Hashem is coming home after more than five millennia. It's the final moments before He enters!

And if there's someone who knows what's needed of her...


If there's someone who steps up, not passing responsibility to what's-her-name—

It's me.

The foundation of my home, caller of the shots, with the eye for those details that matter.

I recognize that it's now or never, And so I do.

Hashem is coming home after all!

What's that pile of papers for you? 





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Welcome
HOME
a feminine factor - the final frontier



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