

What Is Women's Work?

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Dear Editors:

Thank you for putting out such beautiful and uplifting content time and again!

I was very moved by Chana Aber's article ["Thank You for the Rambam," Shvat 2026]. Her story inspired me to start saying three *perakim* of Rambam daily, something I never dreamed I could or would do. Not only am I learning so much from it, but I know Hashem will help me with the miracle I am waiting for. Thank you, Chana, for sharing your experience and enlightening us about this opportunity to unlock miracles in a manner that is above nature, as the Rebbe said would happen when learning Rambam every day.

Looking Forward to My Miracle

USUALLY, LETTERS LIKE THIS MAKE NCN staff very happy. This time, it got mixed reactions. Some people loved it. Others said (paraphrased): "See, I told you then not to publish that Rambam-miracle story! I was afraid it would be taken exactly this way, as if we are promoting the learning of three *perakim* of Rambam a day for women. For your average woman this just isn't doable, and the Rebbe knew that!"

(The following are my own conclusions. I do not speak for other NCN staff members, and I certainly don't speak for the Rebbe. I quote the Rebbe; he speaks for himself.)

Yes, women can and should learn. No question about it. The Rebbe was very encouraging of women learning *Chitas*, which can be done most days within 15 minutes. *Hayom Yom* takes another minute or two. And then there's Rambam. Here's what the Rebbe said about women learning Rambam:

Even though the main *tafkid* of a woman is to be the *akeres habayis*, [responsible for the] *chinuch* of children, everything going on at home, and all the people who live there, [and to influence them for the good in] thought, speech, and action, and therefore she doesn't have a lot of free time, still, in the time she does have, if she will learn Rambam—of course not in the way the men do it, one *perek* per day or three per day, but in the way of *Sefer Hamitzvos*—then this is very beneficial and important. (*Toras Menachem* 5744, Vol. 3, pgs. 1626-1627)

It was very different, of course, for the author of the article, "Thank You for the Rambam," at the time when she took upon herself to learn three *perakim* of Rambam per day. She was on bedrest with a challenging pregnancy. Obviously, she couldn't be doing the hard (but infinitely rewarding) work

that women are supposed to do in their spare time. In the very challenging situation she was in, she couldn't...

Do homework, practice kria'h, tell stories, and sing songs with Jewish children.

Visit the homebound.

Cook for those who can't cook for themselves.

Ready her home for guests, then welcome guests, then take good care of guests, then wash linens and towels and get the house back in order after guests leave.

Spend time with people who need some kind of help. Say Tehillim for people who need some kind of help.

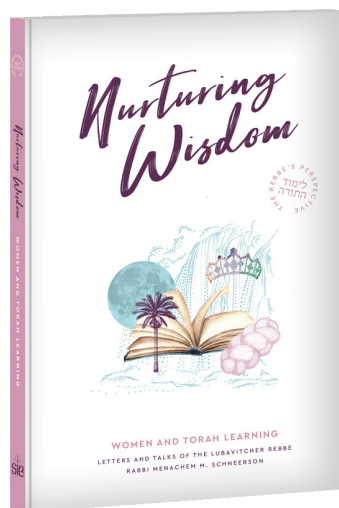
Care for aging grandparents, parents, parents-in-law.

Get broken things fixed, clean out closets and drawers and cabinets, and make the house ready for Moshiach.

A person on bedrest or in other challenging situations perhaps can't do these things so she might decide to learn three *perakim* a day. But to now conclude that this is a goal for all women is not an impression I want to give. If that impression was given, I would like to correct it now.

To quote from the book *Nurturing Wisdom: Women and Torah Learning, Letters and Talks of the Lubavitcher Rebbe* (published by SIE) (page 36):

As can be clearly observed, when a woman ... establishes that she studies Torah daily for a period of time—whether it be



for five minutes, 15 minutes, or a full hour—it enhances her *yiras Shamayim*.

The Rebbe also does say that if a woman wants to, and she can, learn one *perek* or three *perakim* a day, then *tavo aleha brachah*. But one may conclude from reading the letters that in most cases the Rebbe does not find it practical to expect that of a woman who is the *akeres habayis*.

To quote further from the same book (page 55):

Since the main role of the woman is to be the mainstay of the home, which primarily involves educating her sons and daughters, most of her time is dedicated to performing this role. Therefore, the tract most fitting for women

is the smallest in quantity, *Sefer HaMitzvos*.

The Rebbe also says repeatedly that women are obligated to learn about the *mitzvos* that they are obligated to perform; since they are obligated in *yiras Hashem* and *ahavas Hashem*, they need to learn *Chassidus*, and they need to learn the *halachos* related to *kashrus*, *taharas hamishpachah*, etc.

Chana Aber, author of the original article, told the NCN, “Now that I am not on bedrest and am back to raising my family fulltime plus other important activities, I can no longer learn three *perakim* a day.”

When my children were young, when there was a snowy day or we were up late the night before for some reason, I would let my girls stay home and help me take care of the baby and make supper, but I would always try to get my boys to yeshivah, because for the boys, learning was more important. For the girls, learning to care for a baby or make supper was just as important or arguably more important. In fact, I thought (I still think) girls should have no school every Friday and instead they should be expected to make challah, play with or even bathe the baby, set the table, and do Erev Shabbos errands. In other words, let her apprentice for her future role as *akeres habayis*.

Males and females are not the same.

And to the letter-writer who signed her letter “Looking Forward to My Miracle,” AMEN! May it be today! ❧