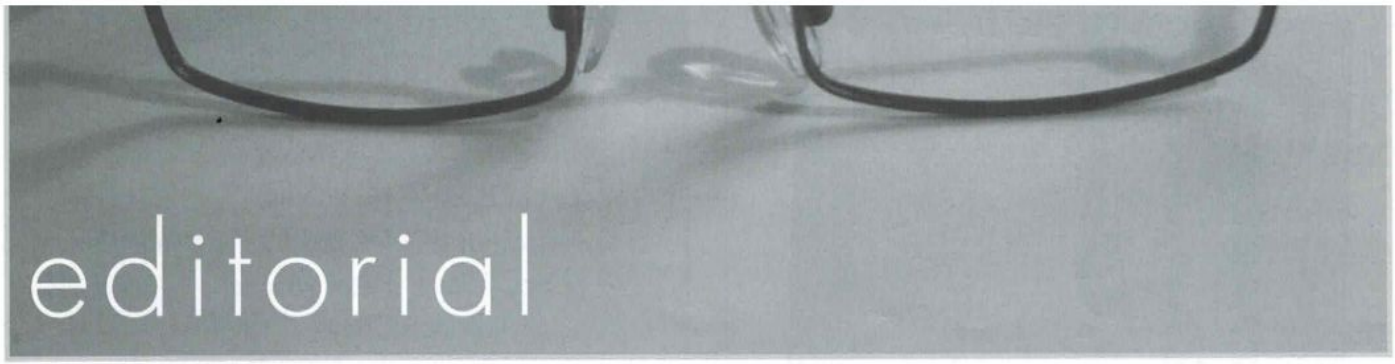


editorial

"Torah is eternal... and as the Baal Shem Tov said many times, something that we saw or heard surely has in it a lesson that is meant for us at the time we saw or heard it. From the story of Chana, we can learn an essential concept that teaches every Jewish family how to behave..." So said the Rebbe on Vov Tishrei 5734 (September 1973).

On Rosh Hashanah in shul, we read in the haftorah the story of Chana, who stayed home with her son Shmuel for the first two years of his life – although going up to Mishkon Shiloh was a high calling in itself. (Mishkon Shiloh had the revelation of the Shechinah like the Bais Hamikdosh that came after it.)

Following is a loose translation of the Rebbe's analysis of the story, as printed in Sichos Kodesh Tof Shin Lamed Daled. To receive an e-mail of the original, in Yiddish, request it from nsheiboard@gmail.com. Thank you, Zalman and Hindel Levitin, for your patient help translating the Rebbe's words (below) from Yiddish. –R.D.

As told in Medrash Yalkut Shiemoni, when Elkanah would go up to Shiloh for aliyah l'regel, he would take along his entire extended family, and every year they would take a different route.

Why?

The medrash explains that he would make rest stops along the way in open spaces and attract attention to his group as they traveled so that people would ask him, "Where are you all going? Where are you taking so many people?"

He would explain, "I am taking my entire household to be oleh l'regel to Shiloh."

Many Jews in the towns and villages he would pass through would join his group, until Hashem would say, "Elkanah aroused the Jews to go to Shiloh - therefore he will have this and this reward," as explained in detail in the medrash.

From this we understand the importance of convincing even one Jew to join in aliyah l'regel ("to see Hashem and be seen by Him"). Imagine how much was accomplished by Elkanah and his household, including Chana! Imagine the many, many Jewish men and women they collected as they traveled, who came with them to Shiloh, and what a great accomplishment it was once they all reached Shiloh!

After longing and praying for a child for many years, Chana gave birth to a son. When it came time for aliyah l'regel, Elkanah assumed that Chana would come along, as always. But Chana refused to go, explaining, "I have a child and I have to wait until he is weaned, until I have raised him ... until then I will remain at home with him."

Chana was a prophetess. She not only saw G-dliness in Shiloh as all Jews did, but she saw as a prophetess sees. She experienced the real geshmak and the true understanding and the greatest feeling for it that could be.

Elkanah was a wealthy man. He could have hired servants and nurses so that Chana could have traveled easily

"It is a victory for a woman to be the same as a man, and therefore she has to try and do battle to prove that she can hold the same position as a man. She, too, can leave home early in the morning and come home late at night, tired. In this way she shows she is not inferior to him, for she can do exactly what he does."

with Shmuel and the trip would not have harmed him.

But it is understandable that the care and attention that one can give a child in one's own home does not compare to that which one can give on a journey, even with all the servants and comforts money can buy.

Alternatively, if she didn't want to take him along, surely Chana could have hired a babysitter for the few weeks she would be gone. In Shiloh she would have filled herself with G-dliness and prophecy, and ultimately her child would have benefited from it as well.

Going up to Shiloh was an obligation on Chana. She had to get a heter from three Rabbonim or a yochid mumche not to go. But she knew that staying home would be best for Shmuel's chinuch.

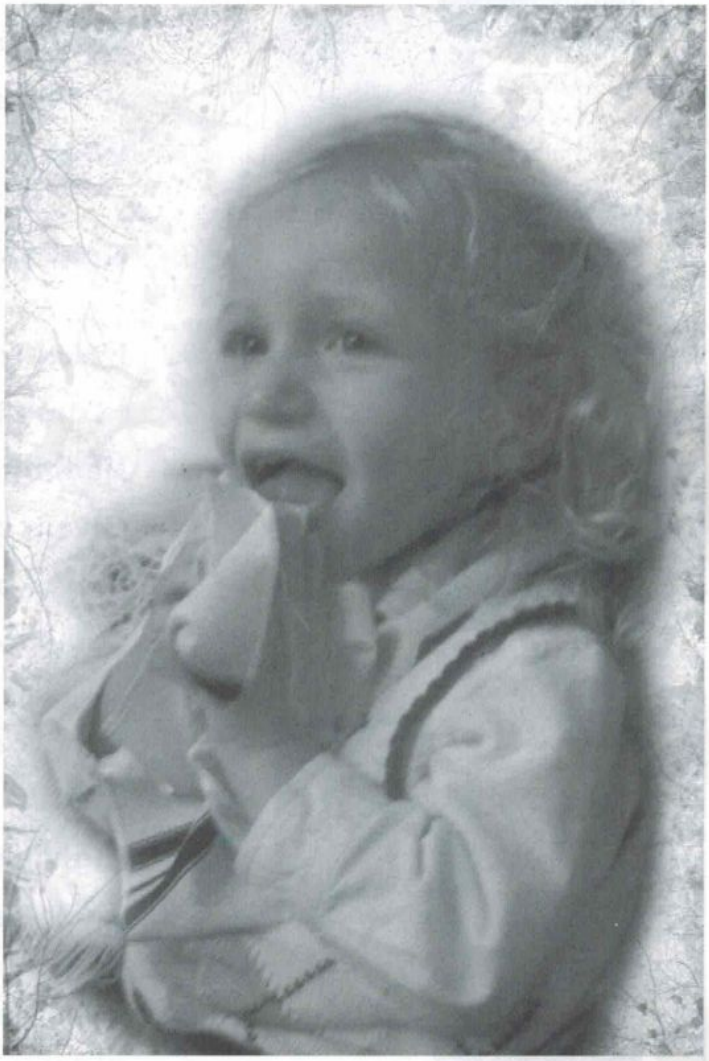
Elkanah understood and accepted what she was saying, for he did not argue or negotiate with her.

When he was two years old, Chana brought Shmuel to Shiloh, ready for him to stay there his whole life, saying, "This is the boy I prayed for." *El hanaar hazeh hispalolti.*

She showed strength and mesiras nefesh by not going up to Shiloh for the first two years of his life in order to ensure that Shmuel would receive the best chinuch possible.

Chana said prophecy afterward [on a higher level], just as if she had gone to Shiloh, which showed that Hashem approved of her decision.

The whole story was described in detail in the Torah and is read every Rosh Hashanah in shul. There are many chapters in the life of Chana that are not written in the Torah. We can assume that whatever is told in detail holds a lesson for all future generations.



Chana sets an example for all Jewish women throughout all generations.

Some mistakenly claim, "It is a victory for a woman to be the same as a man, and therefore she has to try and do battle to prove that she can hold the same position as a man. She, too, can leave home early in the morning and come home late at night, tired. In this way she shows she is not inferior to him, for she can do exactly what he does."

This haftorah comes to teach us that this mindset is based on a false worldview, and is only a way to shake off that which Hashem has placed on a woman.

[Even if it is not a career we are talking about,] an intelligent Jewish mother … can busy herself in many valuable endeavors, even something as important as aliyah l'regel to Shiloh! And on the way she could have stirred up communities of Jews to join them and also go to Shiloh! But Hashem already gave her something which is even greater than aliyah l'regel in Shiloh: Going up to Shiloh does not compare with what a woman can accomplish by staying home and making sure the home is built on the foundations of Torah and mitzvos in general… and the chinuch of her children in particular.

…Hashem established the home and family so that the man does his part, the woman does her part, and hers is not

less important. In fact, maybe, when it comes to the children, her job is more critical than the man's. If both the man and the woman are doing the man's work, who will build and uphold the Yiddishe home?

Now [before Yom Kippur] is a time when we only want to talk about the zchuyos and praises of Yidden, so we'll only say it briefly – some women were required, as a last resort, in order to make parnassah, to become busy with jobs outside the home, and they had to leave their homes. R"L a mistaken belief took hold in the world: that the complete fulfillment for a woman is to do so regardless of need, and to be just like a man.

For her to assume that she will be fulfilled only if she forgets all this and shows that she can be a good professional, or a good wage-earner, would constitute a *drop in status* for her.

This mistaken belief was fully embraced by our society, and now we see what this has accomplished… different members of the family are not close with one another, are not united, do not understand one another…

[We must] change the mistake from its source. The man must do his part and the woman must do her part (which might be even more critical than his) as the akeres habayis. This is not because she is unworthy of the job he holds, but because davka *she* was chosen and entrusted with the chinuch of the children when they are young, from the moment of birth, and nine months before that too, because she is entrusted with their care even during pregnancy, when they eat what she eats.

For her to assume that she will be fulfilled only if she forgets all this and shows that she can be a good professional, or a good wage-earner, would constitute a *drop in status* for her.

Not only does she lose her dignity, and under-estimate her own strengths, but R"L, as spoken in hint (because this is not the time to delve into negatives of the Jewish people, but rather to talk on the good side), the kiyum of Jewish families may be lost.

This is the heartache… if you take a look at what is going on and what needs to be fixed.

But instead [of fixing the misconception], we find Jews who have nothing more to worry about than to tear women away from their true mission, searching for ways to include them in a minyan, etc. They make a big [women's liberation] parade out of it, and with this they claim to have lifted women to their true potential?!

These [mistaken people feel they] deserve a big thank you, and the women celebrate, for now they [believe they] have reached true completion and liberation and fulfillment.

Not even talking about the fact that [much of what they do] is against minhag Yisroel and against halachah, this affects the survival of Jewish families, which is the foundation of the whole Jewish nation. The woman should be busy with her main work, which is chinuch and being an akeres bayis, and not lower herself to imitating men.

A woman might mistakenly say, "We now live in a world where we have to sacrifice our own children so that we can say we live a man's life, and we were even included in a minyan…"

The honor she receives is meaningless – what does she trade it all in for?

She gives up the highest Shlichus which Hashem has entrusted to women, to uphold the Jewish nation, to mold children and grandchildren who can be brought to Shiloh proudly, with the words, *"El hanaar hazeh hispalolti!"*

This is what we hear in shul on Rosh Hashanah, and we must take it to heart throughout the year. Jewish mothers, or girls who are preparing to be mothers (and Hashem will bless them with children), have to know that all other things (even going to Shiloh to see the Face of Hashem) are secondary, for Hashem Himself tells us there is something higher than going to Shiloh.

When Hashem blesses a woman with children and a home, everything else falls to second place and the ikkar becomes her position of akeres habayis. Nobody else can fill her shoes in that home. [Her focus must be] not to imitate and chase after others – nobodies - who don't even know what they want (and who confuse others too), because maybe something good will come from it – no! The woman has to know that her main Shlichus is to be an akeres habayis.

The woman should be busy with her main work, which is chinuch and being an akeres bayis, and not lower herself to imitating men.

Then her children will become like Shmuel (about whom it is said that he is equal to both Moshe and Aaron), who was chosen to anoint Dovid Hamelech, the Goel Rishon. This is the beginning of the coming of Moshiach.

- Sichos Kodesh Tof Shin Lamed Daled