

“A Tribute To Women” –

Rav Soloveitchik noted that in Tenach we find that man is in the forefront of life. Avraham sits *petach ha'ohel* “at the entrance of the tent” (Bereishit 18:1), but Sarah, “Behold is in the tent” (18:9), she is behind the scene. Noteworthy fact is that Avraham lived thirty-eight years after the death of Sarah, yet nothing of substance pertaining to Avraham is recorded in the Torah after Sarah’s demise. So it was with Yitzchak and Ya’akov-no significant accomplishments are recorded after the death of Rivkah and Rachel.

In Tenach (the Bible), we see women as personalities that react to crisis situations. The greatness of man manifests itself in pragmatic, routine logical action. The greatness of woman manifests itself during crisis predicaments. HaShem commands Avraham to listen to Sarah, “Whatever Sarah tells you, listen to her voice” (21:12). It was Sarah who determined that Yish’mael should be banished. It was Rivkah who determined that the Beracha transmitted from Avraham belonged to Ya’akov (27:5-18).

In this week’s Parsha, it was Rachel, who readily abandoned her own happiness in life when she reveals to her sister Leah the secret code between her and Ya’akov that enabled Lavan’s switching of Leah in place of Rachel on their wedding night (Gemara Megilla 13b) **What a Tzaddek!** These women inspired and imbued the Jewish people with their power of perseverance.

Moving ahead to Sefer Shemot we find it was Miriam (the sister of Moshe and Aharon) who was responsible for maintaining the Jewish family when her own father, Amram was about to surrender to the pressure of the times and divorce his wife Yocheved. It was Miriam who persuaded and encouraged her father to have faith and not to despair (Sotah 12b). In Sefer Melachim, it was Devorah the Prophetess who saved the Israelites when she organized the battle against Sisera. Again, in Melachim Aleph (1:15-18) Shlomo HaMelech succeeded his father David HaMelech as a result of Batsheva’s intervention. In Megillat Esther we find that after Mordechai furnished Queen Esther with the data of the looming crisis approaching with Haman’s plan. It was Esther then who took the initiative of organizing a Ta’anit (public fast) and planned the strategy to bring about Haman’s defeat. (Esther 4:15-17). Truly then, woman is the hallmark of “crisis intervention”, and whenever critical action is called for, the shy and reserved woman emerges from her “Ohel –Tent” and rises to the occasion.

Today, life in Israel is full of crisis and challenges; our ministers are at a loss in controlling the terrorists. Perhaps we should heed and be more attentive to what women have to say.