

נשי
ובנות
חב"ד

C H E S H V A N

N'SHEI
U'BNOS
CHABAD

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After a packed Tishrei filled with Yomim Tovim, meals, guests, and family, Cheshvan is when life seems to return to normal. What message does Cheshvan have for women and girls?

On Motzei Shabbos Bereishis at the end of Tishrei 5714, something remarkable happened: that year, Shemini Atzeres and Simchas Torah led directly into Shabbos (like this year), and at the end of Shabbos, the Rebbe farbrenged for the second time that day as a continuation of Simchas Torah. At the conclusion of the lengthy farbrengen, the Rebbe distributed Kos Shel Bracha to all present, after which the Rebbe went out onto the balcony, and addressed N'shei U'bnos Chabad. At the time, such a thing was revolutionary, and the language the Rebbe used to address them was new and innovative at the time, though it has since become accepted. Adapted here for our readers:¹

As we experience it, the new year begins in Cheshvan. Rosh Hashanah may take place in Tishrei, but the experiences of Tishrei's special *Yomim Tovim* place it on its own playing field—it is only after Shabbos Bereishis that we begin our regular, daily life.

The Rabbeim would often describe this with a well-known saying: “*V’Yaakov Holach Lidarko*,” (and Yaakov, meaning every Jew, went on his way), referring to the reality that *every single Jew*, man or woman, now heads off to fulfill the mission from Hashem with which they were entrusted, in their day to day life.

It follows that Jewish women and girls, particularly women and girls of Chabad, (an acronym for the three stages of intellect of *Chachma-Bina-Daas*, Wisdom, Understanding, and Knowledge, as they are used to further the service of Hashem), ought to consider and reflect on their Divine mission at this time, and what message to take at this start of a new year.

In general, the special assignment and mission of

women is to fill their homes with warmth, light, and joy—all in the most genuine form.

To explain:

A truly Jewish home will necessarily be one that is warm, radiant, and joyful.

Creating such a home hinges more on the woman of the home than on the man. Typically, the man is preoccupied with the family's *parnassa* for much of the day and removed from the home setting, while the conduct of the home and the children's upbringing will be in the hands of the mother and wife. Indeed, this is why women are described as *akeres habayis*, the most fundamental and central figure of the home.

This overarching mission of Jewish women is reflected in the three special mitzvos that are entrusted to women:

1. *Neiros Shabbos Kodesh v'Yom Tov* (Lighting of Shabbos and Yom Tov candles) — *Neshek*.
2. *Hafrashas Challah* (Separating the *challah* part of dough for Hashem, and in general *kashrus*).
3. *Taharas Hamishpacha* (Family Purity).

Lighting Shabbos and Yom Tov Candles: Here women add to their home's light in the physical sense too. Having more light makes the home more peaceful, and filling it with light by doing a mitzvah brings Hashem's light too; true, this mitzvah is only on Shabbos and Yom Tov, yet Shabbos and Yom Tov are the source of our strength all week long.

This mitzvah expresses the mission of a woman — to bring peace and illumination from the light and lamp of Torah and mitzvos into her home, upon which Hashem's light can dwell as well.

Separating Challah: This is the mitzvah to take the first part of one's dough and give it to Hashem. In other words, a Jew can transform a portion of his or her dough and bread, the primary human food source, into a dedicated holy item for Hashem.

This demonstrates that women, who are entrusted with this mitzvah, have the charge of taking a portion of the best part of the home's income, best in both quantity and quality, and using it for tzedakah specifically, and in general for matters of Torah and mitzvos.

Elevating this portion of the income causes the rest of the food and income to be used in the right way, for matters that are healthy and good, not for doctors' bills, medications, and other undesirable uses, *chas v'shalom*.

Taharas Hamishpacha (Family Purity): By observing the



THE REBBE DELIVERS A SICHA FROM THE BALCONY OVERLOOKING THE SHALASH.

laws of *nidda*, purity, and *tevila*, a woman brings purity and holiness into her family life. Through this mitzvah one merits to have healthy and good children, healthy in both body and soul; children who continue their lives in the path of Torah and mitzvos and bring true *nachas* and joy to their parents.

This happens when the woman fulfills her mission, the mission of a Jewish mother: to ensure that her children, both sons and daughters, have a truly Jewish upbringing, including that their education be *al taharas hakodesh*, a kosher education in the purest, holy sense, causing the whole family to be one of purity and holiness.

Turning directly toward the gathered women, the Rebbe said:

Women and daughters of Chabad, and all Jewish women! As we begin this new year, remember the important and *geshmake* (pleasant) mission and responsibility you have with regard to the way your homes operate:

You have the ability to make your house a Jewish home, a warm home, a radiant home.

You can bring Hashem's blessing into your home, so that you and your whole family have a healthy, happy, and fortunate year, both physically and spiritually.

My father-in-law the [Friediker] Rebbe would wish people a 'healthy winter'. I wish you using the same language: that you, your husbands, and your children, have a healthy, happy and fortunate winter, and a good *tamid* (always). T

1. Likkutei Sichos vol. 2, pp. 578–80.