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שיינא גאלדא ע"ה  
בת יבלחט"א ר' מיכאל הלוי שיחי'  
גוטלייזער  
נלב"ע כ"ח אלול ה'תשע"ו  
ת"נ צ"ב

נדפס ע"י זקניה  
הרה"ת ר' יצחק מאיר וזוגתו מרת לאה  
ומשפחתם שיחי'  
שפאלטר



# Shemittah and Hakhel: The Woman's Role

*Shemittah* is the Sabbatical year dedicated to Hashem. As the *Sforno* writes:

"All year the workers will be free from agricultural labor... and they will be encouraged to seek G-d."

A Jew's unity with Hashem is strengthened when more Jews study more Torah.

Following *Shemittah* we go into the year of *Hakhel*. During *Sukkos* of that year we have the special mitzvah to

gather men, women and children in the *Beis Hamikdash* — the paramount exercise of Jewish unity.

In all of the subjects we discussed, we can find a special quality and a richer facet, in relation to the gathering of Jewish women.

Consider an analysis of the month of Elul: The heavenly constellation associated with the month of Elul is *Besulah* (*Virgo*) — the young maiden. Symbolically speaking, the young

maiden is a metaphor for the Jewish people based on the verse "young maiden of Israel."<sup>1</sup> The constellation *Virgo* is of course a group of stars which the ancients saw as a young woman, and since the Jewish people have been compared to the stars, in this case they are seen as a young woman who awaits betrothal and marriage. As the *Midrash* says, in the future time the complete marriage of Hashem and the Jewish people will be



realized, and then Hashem will “grant abundant joy to the loving friends.”

This symbolism is more prominent in relation to Jewish women who are the actual young maidens of the Jewish people.

At the marriage of Hashem and the Jewish people — at *Matan Torah* — we also find that the Jewish women were spoken to first. How appropriate it is that Jewish women should gather during the month of Elul whose “fortune” is connected to the young (Jewish) maidens.

...What special status do we attribute to women regarding *Shemitah*? The difference between the *Shemitah* year and the previous six years applies to work in the field and vineyard, which is mainly the domain of the menfolk.

What is in the domain of the woman? “The complete glory of the princess is within!”<sup>2</sup> Thus, for example, the administration of the household, preparation of food and clothing, cleanliness, etc., all of these labors are in the power of the Jewish women and they all continue to be practiced right

through *Shemitah*. Moreover, since the whole year is a Sabbatical year, all aspects of the home take on the loftier aura of Shabbos — including the conduct of the home, the food, clothing, and the invocation of beauty — lighting candles — much more than during the weekdays.

Now, when the men are exempted from the field work during *Shemitah* they should share in the other chores and activities in the house so that it should be permeated with the light of Torah and mitzvos.

Here, however, the women “pull rank” since they have greater experience in dealing with these matters during the six years. They lead the way and show a living example to the men how to illuminate the house with the light of Torah and *mitzvos*.

This leads us to the special role and lofty quality of women in relation to *Hakhel*. The mitzvah of gathering all the Jews includes even the babies and infants. This can only be accomplished by the women, for a father cannot substitute for a mother. No matter how learned he may be, he cannot

give the child the attention, love and motherhood which a mother can give and which the child needs.

Although *Hakhel* in its original form can only be fulfilled in the *Beis Hamikdash*, nevertheless, the spiritual role of *Hakhel* applies now also even more strongly.

“They will thus learn to be in awe of G-d your L-rd, carefully keeping all the words of this Torah. Their children, who do not know, will listen and learn to be in awe of G-d your L-rd as long as you live in the land...”<sup>3</sup>

Here the women assume the major mission, to effect the spiritual theme of *Hakhel* in their own private *Beis Hamikdash* for in her house each woman is the foundation of the home and she makes that home a holy sanctuary. Then her husband and children will listen and observe all the words of the Torah. **T**

(*Sicha to N'shei Chabad*,  
22 Elul 5747)<sup>4</sup>

1. Yirmeyahu 31:3.

2. Tehillim 45:14.

3. Devarim 31:12-13.

4. [www.sie.org/2506362](http://www.sie.org/2506362)