

Teaneck Community Education Conference  
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### **1 בראשית פרשת בראשית פרק א**

כז) וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאָדָם בְּצַלְמוֹ בְּצֶלֶם אֱלֹהִים בָּרָא אֹתוֹ זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה בָּרָא אֹתָם  
 And God created man in His image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

### **2 בראשית פרשת בראשית פרק ב**

כא) וַיִּפֹּל יָקוֹק אֱלֹהִים תְּרִדְמָה עַל־הָאָדָם וַיִּישָׁן וַיִּקַּח אֶחָת מִצַּלְעָתָיו וַיִּסְגֶּר בָּשָׂר תַּחְתָּנָה  
 And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon man, and he slept, and He took one of his sides, and He closed the flesh in its place.

### **3 רש"י בראשית פרשת בראשית פרק א**

זכר ונקבה ברא אותם - ולהלן הוא אומר (בראשית ב כא) ויקח אחת מצלעותיו וגו', מדרש אגדה שבראו שני פרצופין בבריאה ראשונה ואחר כך חלקו.  
 Yet further (2:21) Scripture states: "And He took one of his ribs, etc." The Midrash Aggadah explains that He originally created him with two faces, and afterwards, He divided him.

#### **4 Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch – The Hirsch Chumash (1:27)**

זכר ונקבה ברא אותם. Although all living creatures were created male and female, Scripture mentions this only at the creation of man. The Torah thus teaches us that both sexes were created directly by God, and equally in His image. This is specially emphasized in our verse by the transition from the singular (אֹתוֹ) to the plural (אֹתָם). אָדָם, created in the image of God, is one, and was created male and female. Only both sexes, together, embody the concept of אָדָם in its entirety.

#### **5 Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik – Family Redeemed (pgs. 67-68)**

Man and woman represent not only two sexes with natural anatomic and physiological differences but two ideas of personality. As biologically distinct beings, they are called male and female, but they are not typical of the human race alone. In the animal kingdom and also in the world of plants sex differentiation is the basic trait of their structure and morphology. What is characteristic of the world of man is that sex-physiology is transformed into sex-personality. There is a man-personality and a woman-personality. They are two individualities with

unique existential experiences. The I-awareness contains the moment of sex-personality. The male knows that he exists as a man, the female — as a woman. They experience themselves in different dimensions. The tremor of being manifests itself differently in man and woman.

In Judaism (if it is not distorted by narrow-mindedness and fanaticism) the doctrine of the sex-personality has come to expression at many levels: at the level of creation; at that of the mystical God experience; and at the halakhic.

## **6 בראשית פרשת בראשית פרק ב**

יח) וַיֹּאמֶר יְקֹנֶק אֱלֹהִים לֹא־טוֹב הָיִיתָ הָאָדָם לְבִדּוֹ אֶעֱשֶׂה־לּוֹ עֶזֶר כְּנֶגְדּוֹ

And the Lord God said, "It is not good that man is alone; I shall make him a helpmate opposite him."

## **7 Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch – The Hirsch Chumash (2:18)**

**עזר.** The roots related to **עזר** all denote the concept of *limitation*: **אזר**, **אצר**, **עצר**. The meaning of **עזר**, then, is as follows: An **עזר** relieves his friend of part of his obligations, enabling him to concentrate his energies in a more limited sphere, so that he can fulfill the remaining obligations more effectively. **עזר** is *help by way of concentration*. Whereas **עצר** denotes limitation by force (the letter **צ**), **עזר** denotes limitation that is welcomed; one who receives **עזרה** can exercise greater power in the restricted sphere remaining to him. This is also the meaning of the **עזרה** of the Sanctuary: an auxiliary area. Were it not for the **עזרה**, the **קרבנות** would have to be offered in the **היכל**. With the addition of the **עזרה**, however, the **היכל** is reserved for the highest **כפרה**, whereas all the *paths that lead to כפרה* are served by the **עזרה**.

Similarly, in the case of man and woman, the woman assumes part of the obligations that comprise the prodigious task of mankind, enabling the man to fulfill the remaining obligations more completely. But this is possible only if the **עזר** is **כנגדו** — not **עמו**: the **עזר** should not work with him in one place, but should work opposite him in a different place, in the same line. Had the **עזר** been formed in the image of an **איש**, all the obligations of an **איש** would have devolved upon him, and he, too, would have needed an **עזר**. Hence the **עזר** was formed as an **אשה**, who stands *beside* man, not with him or below him; she works **כנגדו**, *at another point in the same line*. Each one is to work in his or her own special sphere, and thus they will complement each other.

### **8 תלמוד בבלי מסכת ברכות דף לא עמוד א**

אמר רב המנונא: כמה הלכתא גברותא איכא למשמע מהני קראי דחנה: וחנה היא מדברת על לבה - מכאן למתפלל צריך שיכוין לבו

R. Hamnuna said: How many most important laws can be learnt from these verses relating to Hannah! Now Hannah, she spoke in her heart: from this we learn that one who prays must direct his heart.

### **9 תלמוד בבלי מסכת ברכות דף כט עמוד א**

הני תשע דראש השנה כנגד מי? אמר רבי יצחק דמן קרטיגנין: כנגד תשעה אזכרות שאמרה חנה בתפלתה

To what do the nine said on New Year [Musaf Tefillah] correspond? Rabbi Isaac from Kartignin said: To the nine times that Hannah mentioned the Divine Name in her prayer

### **10 Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik "A Tribute to the Rebbetzin of Talne," Tradition 1978 (pg. 77)**

What is *torat imekha*? What kind of a Torah does the mother

pass on? I admit that I am not able to define precisely the masoretic role of the Jewish mother. Only by circumscription I hope to be able to explain it. Permit me to draw upon my own experiences. I used to have long conversations with my mother. In fact, it was a monologue rather than a dialogue. She talked and I "happened" to overhear. What did she talk about? I must use an halakhic term in order to answer this question: she talked *me-inyana de-yoma*. I used to watch her arranging the house in honor of a holiday. I used to see her recite prayers; I used to watch her recite the sidra every Friday night and I still remember the nostalgic tune. I learned from her very much.

Most of all I learned that Judaism expresses itself not only in formal compliance with the law but also in a living experience. She taught me that there is a flavor, a scent and warmth to *mitzvot*. I learned from her the most important thing in life — to feel the presence of the Almighty and the gentle pressure of His hand resting upon my frail shoulders. Without her teachings, which quite often were transmitted to me in silence, I would have grown up a soulless being, dry and insensitive.

The laws of Shabbat, for instance, were passed on to me by my father; they are a part of *mussar avikha*. The Shabbat as a living entity, as a queen, was revealed to me by my mother; it is a part of *torat imekha*. The fathers *knew* much about the Shabbat; the mothers *lived* the Shabbat, experienced her presence, and perceived her beauty and splendor.

The fathers taught generations how to observe the Shabbat; mothers taught generations how to greet the Shabbat and how to enjoy her twenty-four hour presence.

### **11 תלמוד בבלי מסכת נדה דף מה עמוד ב**

ויבן ה' [אלהים] את הצלע - מלמד שנתן הקב"ה בינה יתירה באשה יותר מבאיש  
It is written in Scripture, And the Lord God built the rib which teaches that the Holy One,  
blessed be He, endowed the woman with more understanding

### **12 תלמוד בבלי מסכת יבמות דף סג עמוד א**

אשכחיה רבי יוסי לאלהו, א"ל: כתיב אעשה לו עזר, במה אשה עוזרתו לאדם? א"ל: אדם מביא חיטין, חיטין כוסס? פשתן, פשתן לובש? לא נמצאת מאירה עיניו ומעמידתו על רגליו  
R. Jose met Elijah and asked him: It is written, I will make him a help; how does a woman help a man? The other replied: If a man brings wheat, does he chew the wheat? If flax, does he put on the flax? Does she not, then, bring light to his eyes and put him on his feet!

### **13. Rabbi Norman Lamm – Drasha 1967 (Derashot Ledorot pg. 145)**

"One wonders – for such an interpretation of the function of a wife we need the prophet Elijah? But if we look deeper, we find that we have here indeed an insight of rare wisdom. For, in order to truly be one who enlightens the eyes and places a man on his feet in stability, a wife must take not only the raw material that her husband gives her, but the raw material that her husband is, and transform every great potential within him, every advantageous possibility that he possesses into a creative reality. That is why the wife is called שֹׂאֵר. For just as nutritionally she converts the wheat into bread, just as her fingers weave the flax into clothing, so psychologically she must draw out all hidden talents from her husband, she must bring out the best in him. When she has done that, in this larger sense, then indeed she is one who "brings light to his eyes and puts him on his feet".