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פרשת חיי שרה

WITH

R' AVIGDOR MILLER ZT"l

BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

**The Splendid Home**

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*Part I. The First Mikdash*

**The First Sanctuary**

When we think about the destruction of the two Batei Mikdash it's important to recognize that there was a *churban* that took place even before that. Before the Beis Hamikdash in Yerushalayim, we had the Mishkan. The Mishkan that Moshe Rabeinu built in the Midbar with his own hands, **וַיִּקַּם מֹשֶׁה אֶת הַמִּשְׁכָּן**. Moshe was a big, strong man; he picked up the huge logs, the *kerashim*, and set it all up himself. Ahhh! The Beis Hamikdash that was built by Moshe our Teacher!

It's true, it was much smaller than the Beis Hamikdash in Yerushalayim; it was collapsible so that the Bnei Yisroel should be able to transport it from place to place for forty years. But this House of Hashem came before Dovid and Shlomo built the Beis Hamikdash, and the Shechinah dwelt in the Mishkan in a way that was never equaled again. What Shlomo HaMelech built later was not the same. It was tremendous, it was big and

beautiful and filled with *kedushah*, but still they looked back with longing for those great days when we had a Beis Hamikdash in the wilderness.

And it lasted many years – don't think it was just forty years. After the Bnei Yisroel crossed over the Yarden, that Mishkan that was built in the *midbar* stood in Shilo for another three hundred and sixty nine years. Forty years in the *midbar* and then another three hundred and sixty nine years in Shilo. That's more than four hundred years that our nation benefited from the Mishkan built by Moshe Rabeinu. And therefore, when the Plishtim destroyed Mishkan Shilo it was a very great tragedy in our history.

### **The Ante-First Sanctuary**

But the truth is that there was an even bigger *churban* that took place before the destruction of Mishkan Shilo. When we think about that day of *וַתָּמֹת שָׂרָה*, when Sarah Imeinu passed away, you must understand that it wasn't merely the death of the first of our Imahos. That itself would have been enough to cry about, absolutely, but it was much more than that. We have to know that it was a *churban Beis Hamikdash*; it was the destruction of the first Beis Hamikdash of the Am Yisroel.

That's the truth – the first and greatest *churban haBayis* was when Sarah passed away. The Ramban says that. In his introduction to Sefer Shemos he says that the Shechinah, the Divine Presence, dwelt in the tent of Avrohom and Sarah. And when they passed away, the Shechinah no longer had any place to be.

Of course, to a certain extent the Shechinah remained; because the other Avos and Imahos tried as much as possible to keep up the traditions. When Yitzchok wed Rivkah, it says *b'feirush* that “he brought her into the tent of Sarah, his mother” and then, *וַיִּנְחֶם יִצְחָק אֶת־רֵי אִמּוֹ* – *Yitzchok was consoled after his mother*. What does that mean? His mother used to make *kneidelach* and therefore Rivkah now again started making *kneidelach*? Avrohom didn't have servants who could make *kneidelach* for him? What was it that his mother gave Yitzchok that only Rivkah could console? Why couldn't his father console him?

### **More Than Kneidelach**

The answer is it was Rivkah who supplied what Sarah had formerly done. Sarah was the mother inside the tent. She made that place a Beis Hamikdash. Rivkah did her best to step into the shoes of Sarah Imeinu. It wasn't the same, however. It wasn't the same.

And later again, Yaakov and Rochel and Leah and then the *shevatim*, they lived extraordinary lives of dedication to Hashem, no question about it, and to a certain extent, the spirit still continued. But it didn't compare with the tent that Avrohom and Sarah built. You have no idea of the perfection of Avrohom and Sarah, the perfection of the home they built together. There was nothing like it.

And therefore when Sarah passed away, that was the first *churban*; the presence of Hakodosh Boruch Hu went into exile at that time. And it remained in exile until the children of Yisrael passed through the great experiences, *yetzias Mitzrayim* and *kriyas yam suf* and *matan Torah*, and they were now elevated to such a very great degree of perfection that these great people were now able to come together to build a sanctuary, a Mishkan in the *midbar*, where the Shechinah that had resided at the tent of Avrohom and Sarah, could now finally come to rest again.

### **The Sanctuary Prototype**

Now, to our ears that seems exaggerated. But you have to know that the *menorah* and *shulchan* in the Mishkan and the Beis Hamikdash were only replicas of the *menorah* and *shulchan* in Sarah's tent. When the *kohanim* brought *korbanos* and lit the *menorah*, when they put the *lechem hapanim* on the *shulchan*, it was an imitation. The *shulchan* was an imitation of the *shulchan* on which Avrohom and Sarah ate, and the *menorah* was an imitation of Sarah's candles.

The Chachomim say that. The Medrash (Vayikra Rabbah 21:11) says that when Avrohom brought a *par* for each visitor, it was the prototype for the *par* of the Kohen Gadol on Yom Kippur. You hear such a thing?! The *par* of Yom Kippur was just an echo of the *par* that Avrohom slaughtered for every visitor. And you can be sure that the *challos* that Sarah made were a prototype for all the *challos* that were served in the Beis Hamikdash, the *lachmei todah* and the *lechem hapanim* and the *shtei halechem*. When Sarah was baking, she wasn't baking. She was making a *korban mincha*. She was serving Hashem!

Everything that was done later in the Beis Hamikdash, everything done to cause the Shechinah to dwell among us, was following the prototype of what was done in that tent because that was the first Beis Hamikdash and whatever is written about that home is a model for the rest of our history.

### **Look To The Rock**

You know, Yeshaya Hanavi tells us that if we want to achieve greatness in this world we have to look to Avrohom and Sarah and emulate

them. In Yeshaya 51, at the beginning, the Navi says: שְׁמְעוּ אֵלַי רְדִפֵי צֶדֶק – Listen to me you who pursue righteousness, those who seek Hashem. So what is he going to tell us now? He’s going to tell us how to achieve our goal. Those who wish to become righteous and pursue closeness to Hashem, what’s the way? What should you do?

הַבֵּיטוּ אֶל צוּר הַצִּבְתֶּם – Look to the rock from which you were hewn out, וְאֶל מִקְבַּת בּוֹר נִקְרָתֶם – and to the cistern, that’s a pit, from which you came forth (ibid.) Now what is the rock from which we were hewn out? What is the cistern, the well, from which we came forth?

So Yeshaya continues: הַבֵּיטוּ אֶל אֲבֹרָהֶם אֲבִיכֶם וְאֶל שָׂרָה תְּחוּלְלֶכֶם – Look to Avrohom your father and to Sarah who gave birth to you. That’s the way! The greatness of our first father and mother, the perfection they achieved in the home, is the source for the greatness of our nation.

### Be Mimetic

And so if you want to succeed in attaining *tzedek* and closeness to Hashem, look at them. *Habitu* means keep on looking. Study them, over and over again. Put your mind into it and be mimetic in whatever the Torah tells you about Avrohom and Sarah or whatever the Chachomim add *peirushim* about them. Every detail, every anecdote about them is a gem, and the more serious we are about it the more we can learn about them and gain greatness. You want to know about how to build a Beis Hamikdash of your own? Look at Avrohom and Sarah who together built a Beis Hamikdash.

Now there’s a lot to talk about. If we would sit here all day and all night speaking, and we would do it for years and years, it still wouldn’t be enough. But we have to try, at least a little bit, because we want to build a Mikdash like they did – at least a little bit. Every Jewish home is a Beis Hamikdash and we want to suffuse it with the atmosphere of Avrohom and Sarah.

Now, don’t think it’s just a *mashal*. That’s the truth; every home is a Mikdash. When a *choson* and *kallah* marry it’s exactly like building a Mikdash. That’s why if you come to a wedding, you’re already doing something extraordinary. כָּל הַמְשַׂמְחֵה חֻתָּן וְכֹלָה בְּאֵלוֹ בְּנָה אַחַת מִחֻרְבוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַיִם – If you participate and make them happy at their wedding, it’s like you helped rebuild Yerushalayim (Brachos 6b). A marriage is a rebuilding of Yerushalayim; that’s what the Gemara says.

## Holy Homes

And that's why if they break up their marriage, *chalilah*, מִזְבֵּחַ מוֹרִיד עָלָיו רִמְעוֹת – *the mizbeach weeps* (Gittin 90b). Why does it weep? Why should the *mizbeach* weep if someone in Boro Park gives a *get*? Because a Beis Hamikdash has been destroyed. The Shechinah dwells in the Jewish home and just like the Shechinah departed when the Beis Hamikdash was laid waste, the Shechinah departs when a Jewish home stops functioning.

We think it's just words, *meshalim*. No, no. I'm not talking *drush*. We have no idea the *kedushah* in a Jewish home. In ancient times people understood that. A man once told me, he told this to me about sixty years ago. He had an old mother from Europe who lived with him. He remembered from when he was a boy his mother used to say, "Don't sit on the table. A Jewish table is *kodesh*." A little boy would sit on the table and the mother would shoo him off, "The table is *kodesh*."

We have no idea of the holiness. It's so remarkable I can't describe it to you. I myself have no idea of such *kedushah*. But people lived for Hashem and they lived according to Hashem's principles, with His ideals, and they understood the home was much more than a home, a place to live.

## When The Angels Visit

Once upon a time people believed in *ma'amarei Chazal k'peshuto*. Everybody understood that when a man came home from *shul* with the boys Friday night he didn't come alone. Two *malochim* came along with him. *K'peshuto*. They believed that *k'peshuto*. Two *malochim* came along with him. As they walked in the house, the mother and the daughters were standing all dressed up and greeting them and the *malochim* as they walked in the doorway. They said, "Good Shabbos." It was an experience of feeling the *kedushah*.

And the *malochim* came into the house and the *malochim* saw the table was set. It was a poor little house. The candlesticks were nothing expensive. But they did their best. They took some chicken bones and made soup. Whatever it was, from their limited resources they made Shabbos. And the *malochim* gave them a blessing and they understood it was a blessing. They felt that blessing. Everyone felt the presence of the *kedushah* that the *malochim* brought into the house. And it lasted all week; all week the house was *kadosh*.

Now, it's true that some of that greatness has been lost but it's not lost entirely. *Boruch Hashem*, there are beautiful Jewish homes today. No question, there's *kedushah* in every Jewish home today. Those who keep the Torah, no question. The *malochim* still come. Whether you think about



So why didn't they give them a blessing that they should do the *avodah* correctly, without any mistakes? If I was there I would have said, "The One who rests His name in this House should help you do all the details of the *avodas Hashem* properly." That's most important. וְלֹא תַחֲלִלֵנּוּ אֶת שְׁמֵי קֹדְשֵׁי הַשֵּׁם (Vayikra 22:32).

And I would add, "And you should merit the *siyatta dishmaya* to do it *lishmah* too." Not only perfectly in *maaseh* but the mind too. Sometimes you can do the *avodah* just because of *mitzvas anoshim melumadah*. It's a pity to serve Hashem without thinking and so I would add that into the blessing.

That would be a beautiful *brocha* for the family of *kohanim* entering the Beis Hamikdash: "The One who rests His name in this Home should help you fulfill all the details without any errors and you should merit to do it all *l'sheim Shomayim*."

### **The Most Important Requirement**

But no, the blessing is nothing like that; nothing is mentioned in this *brocha* except for peace and brotherhood. "You should live together *b'shalom*. You should get along with each other and live in harmony and *achdus* and friendship."

It's a remarkable thing! Is that what you came here for?! You're coming to the Beis Hamikdash for friendship, for *shalom*?! It's a family gathering?! You're coming here to serve Hashem, to bring the *korbanos*! You're coming to bring the *menachos* and *ketores* and to light the *menorah*.

And so we're learning something new now. Absolutely you're coming into the Beis Hamikdash to serve Hashem. But in what way? What's the most important way, the first way to succeed in *avodas Hashem*? The answer is by not quarreling with each other; by being kind to each other and helping each other. By loving each other and living in peace.

Of course you must take care of all the details of the *avodah*. Absolutely you shouldn't make anything *possul*, and absolutely you should do it *l'sheim Shomayim*, no question about it. But the very first and most important requirement is it should be with *ahavah* between the *kohanim*. If you wish the Shechinah should dwell in the Beis Hamikdash, number one on the list is that the *kohanim* who are serving there, should be serving together with אֶהְיֶה וְשָׁלוֹם וְרַעוּת אֶהְיֶה וְאֶהְיֶה אֶהְיֶה between themselves.

### Praying For Harmony

And it's no coincidence that we find those same exact words in the *sheva brochos*, when we bless the *chosson* and *kallah*. Because they're going now into their own little Beis Hamikdash. Now, it's not in Yerushalayim Ir Hakodesh. And it's not a big beautiful edifice. Could be it's a small rundown apartment somewhere in Crown Heights or Flatbush. The pipe under the sink is always springing a leak and there are mice that run around at night. No matter! That little home is a Beis Hamikdash. And when you walk into that home, number one on the list is אהבה ואחווה ושלווה – *love and brotherhood, peace and friendship*.

And so as the *chosson* and *kallah* are standing under the *chuppah*, a *frum chosson* is saying a *tefillah*. He's shaking back and forth. The *kallah* is holding a little *sefer*, saying *tefillos*. Wonderful! What are her *tefillos* about? Everything! Everything is important! But number one her *tefillos* should be that no matter how mean and stubborn the *chosson* is, that she should be polite to him always. And him too; the number one *tefillah* for him should be that no matter how wild and *narish* his wife will be, he'll always be polite to her. They're both *davening* that they should always treat each other with only respect.

### The Mule and The Fool

Don't think it's not an important *tefillah*. Because every husband is stubborn. And every wife is *narish*. Everybody is foolish. You'll find out when you get married. All husbands are stubborn like mules, this you have to know. There isn't a husband who is not stubborn like a mule. And there isn't a woman who is not frantic about it like a wild cat. They're not what you thought they were. It's always different than you imagined.

And if you think that what I'm saying is superfluous, let me tell you, that's the first thing you have to learn! You know, if it was up to me, I would institute in all the girl's schools – in all the seminaries – courses for success in marriage. I used to speak to the Bais Yaakov girls frequently and when I brought up this topic of studying for success in marriage they thought of it as a waste of time. They wanted to hear – the good girls wanted to hear – about the *mefarshim*, what the Malbim says, what the Kli Yakar says, what this *peirush* says. Now that's wonderful. But the most important *peirush* is: what does Hakodosh Boruch Hu say on the subject of living with another person in the same house?

### A Spirit of Love

And so when we're building a Mikdash of marriage, there are many things you have to think about. What things are you going to bring into

your home? Certain things can't be brought in. You can't have a television or gentile newspapers in a Beis Hamikdash.

You have to think about how you're going to raise children. You're not raising children in a home like the rest of the world does. You're bringing them up in a Mikdash. What's going to be the spirit of learning Torah in that Mikdash? What's going to be the attitude towards *tzadikim*? Towards *mitzvos*? What's going to be the table talk in the house? There are many things to think about.

But the very first thing you have to think about is אהבה ואהבה ושלום ורעות, *love and brotherhood and peace and friendship*. Between the husband and wife, between the siblings, between the children and parents. Everything is important but the first idea is you're coming into a house to build a place where the Shechinah wants to dwell. מי ישכון את שמו בבית הזה, *The One who rests His name in this Jewish home*, הוא ישכין ביניכם אהבה ואהבה, ושלום ורעות, *He should make peace between you*. That's the very first, the foundation of all the requirements, if you want the Shechinah to dwell in your house.

### **Shalom Brings Holiness**

And that's the attitude that maintains the *kedushah* of the home. That's what maintains the holiness of the home where the *malochim* come in, the holiness of the table, the holiness in the kitchen and living room and bedrooms. It mostly depends on this one thing: Shalom!

Like the Gemara says, איש ואשה שלום ביניהם שכניה ביניהם (Sotah 17). When there is *shalom* between a husband and wife, the Shechinah resides between them. What's the difference between איש and אשה? He has a *yud* and she has a *hei*. A *yud-kei*, Hashem's name. That's how it's explained by the Maharsha; there's a *יה* between them. But it's not a *marshal* – it's actually so! The Shechinah is in your midst. At the wedding, they start out with that attitude of *shalom*. When he says, "הרי את מקדשת לי", it's a language of *kedushah*, which means at the outset, there are three partners in a wedding. The Shechinah is there at the wedding at the beginning.

Only, they mustn't chase it away. Every *chosson* and *kallah*, it doesn't matter if they married yesterday or fifty years ago, they have the function of maintaining the Shechinah in the home. That's an integral part of their lives – as human beings, and especially as *shomrei Torah*. The *oved Hashem* must understand that his and her function in life is to maintain the presence of the Shechinah in his marriage no less than it was at the beginning when there was only *shalom*.

## Happily Ever After

Now, don't get mixed up when you hear these words and think like a gentile. It doesn't mean that *romance* will be there no less than in the beginning. Forget about that. The young princess you married when she was eighteen; she was slim and beautiful, now she's fat and she's wrinkled maybe. It can't be helped. And what are you anyway? You're not the same Prince Charming. Far from it! It's ridiculous! It's unreal to expect those feelings to exist forever! You have to be realistic. You're using the same bathroom. You sit and eat together. Sometimes you don't like the way she chews her food; she makes too much noise when she eats. Or she talks too much. Sometimes she doesn't like his ways either.

You know, in the old time romance novels a husband and wife always lived happily ever after. That was always the end of the story. Now, to a certain extent it's a good attitude but actually it's impossible! It's unreal and people are in for a very big disappointment. It's a *pusteh chalom*, an empty dream. The imaginary ideas that have been foisted upon us by Western culture over the last 300, 400 years are 95% false and it makes life impossible to live because we expect these attitudes to remain forever without any work.

Romance is only before marriage. You know that? It's an instinct, that's all. It's nothing more than two dogs meeting in the street. It's the same instinct that you see when the male dog is barking on the street. In order to bring romance to an end you get married and now it's something else.

## True Love

וַתְּהִי לוֹ לְאִשָּׁה וַיֵּאָהֲבָהּ – And Rivkah became Yitzchok's wife and he loved her (Chayei Sarah 24:67). After Yitzchok and Rivkah were married, that's when they loved each other. And the love that develops after marriage as in the case of Yitzchok, that's the love of a very close and near relative. Your wife is your closest relative, a special kind of relative, and that feeling of affection and love certainly develops and ripens with the years.

So of course there's a happily ever after. You'll walk down together to the *chuppah* at your grandchildren's weddings! You'll be buried together in the cemetery and you'll be together in Olam Haba too. Sure, why not? But there's an essential ingredient needed to create that eternal bond of marriage. And we're learning now that number one is *shalom veshalvah*; number one is אַהֲבָה וְאִתְּחָה וְשָׁלוֹם וְרַעוּת. It means a lifetime devoted to the principle of respect and affection and loyalty and helping one another.

Even when you're married fifty, sixty, seventy years that ideal continues to be the number one principle – אֲהַבְהָ וְאָחֲזֶה וְשָׁלוֹם וְרַעוּת.

## Part III. The First Step

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### Opportunity For Love

Now, there's a special *mitzvah* in the Torah that everybody knows, but it's not spoken about enough. And that's **וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֶךָ כְּמוֹךָ**. If you're a *frum* Jew, this has to be one of the major roles in your attempt to serve Hashem. Anybody who wants to serve Hashem, even in a moderate way, must make up his mind that this is going to be a major target of his life's aspiration.

But what is overlooked by many people is that one of the most important opportunities to fulfill this *mitzvah*, or *chas v'shalom* the opposite, is in the home with a spouse. **וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֶךָ כְּמוֹךָ** means that a husband is *mechuyav* to love his wife like himself; and vice versa. Now, whatever that means exactly we'll explain soon but it's an obligation that stands behind the whole marriage.

I'll explain that. The Gemara says (Kiddushin 41a), that when a man is about to marry somebody, he shouldn't do it through an intermediary. He should first go and take a look at his intended because later, if he didn't see who he was marrying, he might be disappointed and he won't fulfill properly the commandment of **וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֶךָ כְּמוֹךָ**. So you see that this *mitzvah* that you should love your fellow Jew applies to your wife just as well as anybody else.

### Obligation To Love

The truth is it applies much more to your wife. I'll explain that briefly. Pirkei Avos tells us an important principle for Torah living: **הַכֹּל לְפִי רֹב הַמַּעֲשֵׂה** – *Everything depends on how numerous the number of acts are* (Avos 3:15). If a *mitzvah* is done once, there's a reward for it, if a *mitzvah* is done many times there's a much bigger reward.

And Rabeinu Yonah explains that it's not just because you did it more times. It becomes exponentially greater; even the smallest *mitzvah* repeated a number of times, he says, is like taking thin cords and twisting them together, and then twisting more of them together, and finally it becomes a big, heavy rope. That's how great it is to repeat a *mitzvah* over again.

Now, what situation is presented to a man or a woman that gives them the opportunity to repeat again and again the *mitzvah* of loving your fellow Jew? There's nothing like marriage. Because your uncle, your neighbor, your friend, you'll come into contact with him here and there. It's good but it's nothing compared to your wife. You're in contact with your wife all the time. You'll have tens, maybe hundreds of opportunities every day, thousands every week. It's like a thousand different people!

And so when a person is married, he must make up his mind that no matter what, he's going to love his mate. You can't escape it. And she too should have that in mind. There's no way around it; you're *mechuyav* to love your spouse.

### **Love Your Husband**

Did you ever try that? You see your husband, a fat, old fellow, waddling in the street; short and fat. You have to say, "I love that man." It's a *mitzvah min haTorah!* Why not? Hashem loves fat, short people. If they are Jews, *shomrei Torah*, He loves them intensely, more than anything in the world. And He loves them, so we love them too.

Now the fact that he's your husband doesn't mean that he's deprived of that right. Actually, the fact that he's your husband obligates you to concentrate on him more than anybody else. *Halevai* you should love him a fraction of what Hashem loves him!

You have to work on it. And if you do it, Hakodosh Boruch Hu will give you reward. What reward? Little by little, you'll actually feel it. הַחַיִּצּוֹנִיּוֹת מֵעוֹרְרֵת אֶת הַפְּנִימִיּוֹת. Little by little it'll percolate down from your head into your heart.

### **Love Your Wife**

You see your wife walking in the street; she gave you a good tongue lashing when she walked out of the house this morning and you're still angry at her. You see her now walking in the street, she's coming back from the store carrying shopping bags. So you say, "I love that woman! She's bringing home food for us and she's going to slave away in the hot kitchen so that we can enjoy our meals. I love her!"

Of course, if you say these words and then when she comes into the home you're a tyrant, so it's not worth much. If you're complaining about how much money she spent, so you're upending the principle of אֲהִבָּה וְאַתְחִיבָהּ וְשָׁלוֹם וְרַעוּת. The wife too; if she says she loves her husband but as soon as he walks in the door she begins to chew his ear off, to nag him constantly, then it's not worth as much.

### **Be Polite**

Because when we say *shalom* and love and friendship, we expect real results to come forth from that *mitzvah*. It requires constant care with words. Politeness should always reign supreme in the house. Just like you feel differently when you're asked to do something politely, so you always ask your wife, "Please." You say, "Sarah, will you please hand me this-and-this."

Of course, the best thing is to get up and hand it to yourself. I don't like it when husbands sit at the table and call to the kitchen, "Sarah, a little more sugar, please", "a little more of this." What are you, a cripple? Boruch Hashem, you have two good feet! Get up you lazy fellow, and do it yourself! But if you have to ask, say "Please" each time; at least that much.

When the wife needs money for the children she comes and says, "Chaim, I need money to buy shoes for the children, please." And he says, "Of course, Chana, here it is." And she says, "Thank you." Now, it's all superfluous because that's his job; he has to supply that money. But by saying please and thank you, she has lubricated the relations of life.

### **Be Respectful**

Not only politeness. Respect. *Shalom* means to respect each other. Of course, they don't insult each other but even more than that, a certain amount of *kavod* you have to show. You have *derech erez* when you talk to each other. You know once you're married, she's not always putting on earrings and she's not always painting her face. You see her as the plain person that she actually is. And she sees you sometimes with your suspenders, without your *kapote*. And so you might look down on each other. No; you have to be careful with the *kavod* of each other always. Always do things in a way that demonstrates a certain regard for your mate.

And Hashem is between them when they're respecting each other. *Shechinah beineihem!* Hashem says, "They are respecting Me. I'm there now because they're living with an awareness of the *kedushah* that reigns supreme in the Jewish home." And that's how they become successful. Not just successful in having a happy home. That's very important but it's not everything. It's success in *avodas Hashem*. It's how you build the *Beis Hamikdash*.

Now, I know that it's easy for me to say these words and it's easy for you to listen, but living that way, it's not as easy. And so you always find ways to think thoughts that will encourage that attitude of the mind.

## Years Of Gratitude

Here's a woman, she's working in the kitchen; why shouldn't she donate one minute to think thoughts of respect, of gratitude, of appreciation. "My husband is sitting all day long in Manhattan. He hates it there. He'd like to be back in the *yeshivah*, but he wants to support the family. He's laboring. Money doesn't grow on trees. It's very hard to make a living with competitors and difficult customers, and still every day he went loyally. He did his job and brought the money home. He's paying the rent. He buys us garments. He paid for the grocery bills. He paid the butcher. He pays the tuition for the children. How grateful we are to Chaim!"

And the *chosson* all his life should appreciate the *kallah*. When she's an old *kallah* of 90 years old and he's an old *chosson* also of 90 odd years, he should still appreciate his *kallah*. The fact is, even more. A loyal husband is thinking all the time, "Look at all that she did for me all those years. **בְּמַלְתָּהּ לִּי טוֹב**, *she did to me kindness*, **בְּל יָמֵי חַיֵּיהָ**, *all the days of her life*."

How many times did she cook good meals for him? She said, "Chaim, can I give you a glass of orange juice?" "Chaim, do you want a piece of cake?" How many times did she offer him tidbits? All her life. All her life.

So it's not only at the beginning, under the *chuppah*, the *chosson* looks at the *kallah* and she looks at her *chosson*, they're nice-looking young people. They're well-dressed now for the *chasunah* too. That's not the only time they should appreciate each other. The older they get the more they should study this *sugya*. By means of constantly reviewing these ideas in their thoughts they learn to appreciate each other more and more as the years go by.

## Be Expressive

And better yet, they can express the thoughts to each other. You're bashful? It's already thirty years and you never did it before? Do it anyhow. Did you ever hear a woman say that? "My husband, we are very grateful for all that you do for us."

And he should always say to her, "My wife, your cooking is delicious. You're raising up the children; an excellent job you're doing. The house is nice and clean. You're doing your best. I certainly appreciate what you're doing." Each one has to express gratitude to the other one.

And it's by means of living this way, that's how you live successfully. That's what Hashem is looking for; and He's living between both of you just because of that, just because you understand what the first and most important function of building a Beis Hamikdash and a home is.

## Ups, Downs and Idealism

What is the first function of the *kohanim* in the Mikdash? It's a function of הָיָה שָׂמוֹ בְּבֵית הַזֶּה - *The One Who caused His name to dwell in this House*, הוּא יֵשְׁבֵן בְּיַיְכֶם - *He should cause among you, the incoming ones, the new mishmor*, אַהֲבָה וְאַחֻזָּה וְשָׁלוֹם וְרַעוּת - *love and brotherhood, peace and friendship*. That's also the obligation you assume when you marry, and no matter how you are tried and tested, you should never yield. You have to fight the *yetzer hora* of arrogance, of selfishness, of trying to vent your feelings on your partner. It should always be your principle to maintain אַהֲבָה וְאַחֻזָּה וְשָׁלוֹם וְרַעוּת in the house, no matter what.

Now, nobody is a *malach*, nobody is completely successful; there are ups and downs, there are failures, sometimes there are minor tragedies. But always a husband and wife should keep before their eyes, a mutual ideal, "We want this place to be the Beis Hamikdash. It's the only home we'll ever have on this little earth. And therefore in our short, little lives, why shouldn't we try to make the best of it? And if we live successfully, even partially successfully, by being kindly to each other, and by serving Hakodosh Boruch Hu by the means of successful living together, then we've lived on this earth for a purpose."

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# QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

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שאל אביך ויגדך זקניך ויאמרו לך

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Q:

**Why is it that out of all animals, it's monkeys that resemble man most?**

A:

And the answer is that if you make a blood analysis, you'll discover that there are some animals whose blood resembles human blood more than monkeys' blood does. A monkey has no more intelligence than a dog. In fact, the porpoise – it's a marine mammal – can learn more tricks than a monkey. We shouldn't be deceived by the fact that a monkey in a certain manner resembles a human being. In intelligence, he is no better than other animals.

The fact is that in circuses they have trained porpoises to come out of the water and balance balls on their nose. They leap over certain hurdles and they can do tricks – remarkable things they've been taught to do and they're considered intelligent marine mammals, if animals could be called intelligent. But monkeys, no matter how much you try, you'll never teach them to do what a human being has to do. Even what a seven-year-old boy or a three-year-old boy can do, a monkey will never learn to do.

Of course, there's a big ballyhoo in the magazines. They say monkeys have been trained to do this and they're making progress and soon who knows what's going to happen?! I'll tell you what's going to happen. Thousands of years will pass by and they'll still be plain monkeys.

And why they resemble human beings? Well, resemblance doesn't mean anything. We shouldn't allow ourselves to be deceived by the claims of evolutionists. This has nothing to do with evolution.

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