ד''ת לשבועות—מחנה מורשה—תשס"ח

בזמן מתן תורה: "כֹּ ה תֹ אמֶר לְבֵית יַעֶקֹ ב וְתַגֵּיד לְבְנֵי יִשראל"...רש"י: לבית יעקב - אלו הנשים:

מעמד הנשים בתורה שנוי במחלוקת ובשיקולים עדינים

The following is based on my (as yet unpublished paper), "The Different Blessings for Men and for Women"—May 29, 2008

A new explanation of שלא עשני אשה. The problem with this blessing is well known: it is, on the face of it, clearly anti-feminine. And there seems to be no reason for it! And what of the woman's blessing – שעשני כרצונו?

The classical interpretation by Abudrahm is not completely satisfying, but at least it addresses the issue fairly: that a woman has less positive commandments than a man does. This seems structurally reasonable, because the preceding blessings can be explained by the same rationale: שלא עשני עבד and שלא עשני עבד are also understandable as referring to the number of Mitzvot each category requires. However, this itself raises questions about fairness.

A new explanation of שלא עשני אשה. The problem with this blessing is well known: it is, on the face of it, clearly anti-feminine. And there seems to be no reason for it! And what of the woman's blessing – שעשני כרצונו?

The classical interpretation by Abudrahm is not completely satisfying, but at least it addresses the issue fairly: that a woman has less positive commandments than a man does. This follows with stylistic logic from the previous two blessings, שלא עשני עבד and שלא עשני עבד - each is limited in the number of commandmens to which he is obligated. However, this itself raises questions about the essential fairness, especially with regard to the two genders.

What follows is a simple explanation based on the work of Rabbi Zadok, the "Kohen of Lublin." The latter, in his צדקת הצדיק, refers to a passage in the Talmud (ברכות ל"ה ע"ב) attempting to reconcile two apparently convicting verses -- one that maintains that ואסכת "Strangers will arise and take care of your sheep," and the other which says that ואסכת "You shall gather your corn and oil and wine." The first verse implies that you will not have to expend any effort to provide for your self-sustenance, whereas the second implies that you will have to work for your living. The Talmud's solution is to say that the former applies to a situation when Jews עושין רצונו של מקום, Jews do the will of the Almighty, and the latter refers to a situation when אין עושין רצונו של מקום yelfort His will.

On the face of it, this involves a self-contradiction: the verse about "You shall gather your wine and oil and corn," appears in the passage in Deuteronomy which begins, והיה אם שמוע "It shall be *if you observe the commandments* of your God." Hence, how can one say that this refers to a time when Jews do *not* obey the will of the Almighty.

The profound resolution proffered by R. Zadok is that there is difference between מצוה (mitzvah) and רצון (ratzon): the former focuses on the minimum requirements of the law, whereas the latter entails the fulfillment of the transcendent divine will which goes far beyond mere legality. Hence, once we perform the ratzon of the Almighty -- others will take care of our business. If we observe only His mitzvot, then we shall have to work diligently in order to prosper. Ratzon goes far beyond mitzvah.

Hence we understand the difference between the two blessings. שלא עשני אשה is recited by males because males have more *mitzvot* in number than do women. However, this is only – *mitzvah*—commandment, law. Women, however, have a more elevated degree of achievement and greater esteem, for they go beyond *mitzvah* and perform the Almighty's *ratzon*: Hence, שעשני *She'asani ki'retzono*.

In sum: the male's blessing is essentially for his halakhic obligations, fulfilling the niceties of the law in all its minutia. The female blessing is essentially spiritual—less cerebral, less discursive, but more of an exercise of imagination, faith, devotion, spirituality. The halakhic is prose—focused, discursive, apodictic. The spiritual is poetic—limitless, transcendent, soaring.

Similarly, with commandments concerning love – of God, humans, strangers -- a man, as a halakhic person, loves because it is commanded. A woman, a more spiritual being, performs the commandments -- out of love.

1) To add to end of Morasha talk on women: mitzvah and ratzon

Now that we have established that the special blessing recited by men refers to the concept of *mitzvah*, and the one recited by women is linked to the concept of *ratzon*, we may ask: what is the relation of these to the other principle, which we found so disturbing at the beginning of our talk, namely, *nashim daatan kallot*.

The answer is that there is a tension between law and spirit, between Halakha and Agadah, between the physical act and the *pneuma*, and this tension has been studied and debated and applied throughout the ages.

When, in the Bible, the two sons of Aaron, *Nadav* and *Avihu*, are accused of bringing a "false fire" into the temple service, tradition explains this as being an excess of prophecy to which they were not entitled. There sin was, in other words, over-emphasis on the spirit at the expense of the law.

In the Talmud we read that it is forbidden for a prophet *le'chadesh davar*. In other words, prophet, whom the spirit is dominant, is forbidden to interfere with Halakha or the life of mitzvah.

In the struggle between Halakha and Kabbalah, there had to be established an equilibrium between law and mysticism, between the religiously required act and its accompanying spirituality. That equilibrium changed in different places and in different times. But an equilibrium had to be established. The masters of Halakha were always

sensitive to the dangers of being swept away by the excesses of the spirit, and the masters

of the spirit were always concerned about the stifling nature of Halakha alone.

Now we are in a position to understand the question of *nashim daatan kallot*. As

we explained initially, men as a rule are linked to mitzvah, law, and women to ratzon, or

spirituality. Neither is exclusive, and each is expected to pay homage to the other, but

too often it happens that the spiritual in the process of expressing itself, tends to go to

extremes and therefore turns antinomian and thus in violation of Halakha. This is

especially noticeable in women, who as devotees of ratzon after all are the ultimate

expression of the spiritual. Hence, our principle of nashim daatan kallot means that

women are predisposed to the spiritual, and therefore tend to give excessive an

unwarranted emphasis to the spiritual over the legal.

When the proper balance is established, then most men and women can feel

satisfied in their individual forms of religious expression in Judaism.

file name: Morasha talk.

דורה שור זנן משה מורשה קהיאת יולקב לשבועות מחנה מורשה תשם"ח

"כּ ה ת אמַר <u>לְבִית יַעָק ב</u> וְתַגֵּיד לְבְנֵי יִשראל";רש"י: <u>אלו הנשים:</u>בכלל, יש להתבונן בסוגית הנשים בתורה--שנוי במחלוקת ובשיקולים עדינים

Can't cover whole field...just a few items:

1. משנה סוטה: בֶּן עַזַּאי, חַיָּב אָדָם לְלַמֵּד אֶת בָּתוֹ תּוֹרָה.. רַבִּי אֵלִיעַזַר אוֹמֶר, כָּל הַמְלַמֵּד אֶת בִּתוֹ תוֹרָה, כְּאִלוּ מְלַמְּדָה <u>תִּפְלוֹת</u>

2. קד' פ-ב: משנה לא יתייחד אדם עם שתי נשים אבל אשה א' מתייחדת עם שני אנשים. <u>גמ'</u> מ"ט תנא דבי אליהו הואיל ונשים דעתן קלות עליהן רש"י: ושתיהן נוחות להתפתות: בב"י-- שמא יתעלפו

רש"י (ע"ז י"ח-ב) "ואיכא דאמרי משום מעשה דברוריא" (ע"ז י"ח-ב) ליגלגה על שאמרו חכמים (קדושין דף פ) נשים דעתן קלות הן עלייהו ואמר לה חייך סופך להודות לדבריהם וצוה לאחד מתלמידיו לנסותה לדבר עבירה והפציר בה ימים רבים עד שנתרצית וכשנודע לה חנקה עצמה וערק רבי מאיר

One of most nettlesome problems --

.....אבודרהם....אבודרהם.....אבודרהם......אבודרהם..... אבל:יש לי שיטה אחרת ופירוש אחר...

Q:dffrnt angle:Tor: rward/punshmt f obdnc/disobdnc:as --והיה עקב תשמעון את המשפטים האלה"/ "השמר לך פן תשכח את ה' "אלקיך". וכן:"והיה אם שמוע תשמע

Note dfffrncs:some:ethr/or, as --

כתוב אחד אומר: "תמיד עיני ה' א-להיך בה", וכתוב אחד אומר "המביט לארץ ותרעד, יגע בהרים ויעשנו". כיצד יתקיימו שַני כתובים הללוף כשישראל עושים רצונו של מקום ומוציאין מעשרותיהן כתיקונן, תמיד עיני ה' א-להיד בה מראשית השנה ועד אחרית השנה ואינה ניזוקת כלום. בשעה שאין ישראל עושין רש"מ ונן מוציאין מעשרותיהן כתיקונן - המביט לארץ ותרעד.

Here: extremes - OK or terrbl punshmnt. Next - uncertain:

איש אל אים ביצד הם אים ווחנן ור' אלעזר. חד אמר פניהם איש אל אחיו, וחד אמר פניהם אל הבית. מאן דאמר פניהם איש אל אחיו דכתיב 'ופניהם איש אל אחיו' ...ומאן דאמר פניהם אל הבית דכתיב 'ופניהם אל פני ?הבית! ולמאן דאמר ופניהם איש אל אחיו, והא כתיב ופניהם אל פני הבית? לא קשיא: כאן בזמן שישראל עושין רצונו של מקום, כאן בזמן שאין ישראל

'עושין רש'ימ.

The last case is novel – if OK, reward; if so=so. Then so-so.....
ת"ר ואספת דגנך מה ת"ל לפי שנא' לא ימוש ספר התורה הזה מפיך יכול דברים
ככתבן ת"ל ואספת דגנך הנהג בהן מנהג דרך ארץ דברי ר' ישמעאל רשב"י
אומר אפשר אדם חורש בשעת חרישה וזורע בשעת זריעה וקוצר בשעת קצירה
ודש בשעת דישה וזורה בשעת הרוח תורה מה תהא עליה אלא בזמן שישראל
עושין רש"מ מאכתן נעשית ע"י אחרים--ועמדו זרים ורעו צאנכם וגו' ובזמן
שאין ישראל וכו'מלאכתן נעשית ע"י עצמן--ואספת דגנך

?א"כ: לציית=מצויין;עושין *מצוותו*אבל לא ר*צונו*—ככה ככה..והשאלה:ההבדל?

Probl w שני אשה/שעשני כרצונו anti- feminine

The classicl interpretation Abudrahm=not comptely satisfying, but at least it addresses issue fairly: that a wom has less posty commndmts than man. Seems structurally reasnable, bec preceding blessings can b explaind by same rationale: understandable as referring to the number of Mitzvot each category requires. However, this itself raises Qs about fairness. So, a new explanation needed

R.Zadok, refers to Talm *Bedr 35* .-=simple explantn based להשוות ואספת דגנך ותירושך ויצהריך/ועמדו זרים ורעו צאנכם להשוות ואספת דגנך ותירושך וצונו של מקום...ואספת=כשאין. הגמ' מתרצת: ועמדו זרים=כשעושין רצונו של מקום...ואספת=כשאין. *וקושיא: ה לא פרשת אספת מתחיל "והיה אם שמוע..."*

ותרוצו: רצון > מצווה....לפיכך: שעשני כרצונו > שלא עשני אשה

In sum: <u>male's</u> blessg=essentlly f hs <u>hale</u> obligations, fulfilng niceties of law in all minutia. <u>Female</u> blessg= essently sprtl-- less cerebrl/discursive, but more an exercise of <u>material magnin/fth/devotn/ sprtity</u>. The halkic=prose:focusd/ discursv/ apodictic. The sprtal=poetic -- limitless, transcendent, soaring.

Similarly, w mitzvot re:LOVE of Gd/humns/ strangrs; *man*, as a halkhe persn, loves bec it=commandd. A woman, a more siriual being, performs commandments--out of love.

THUS my hesber>usual (Abdrhm)whch-apologtic, while mine makes female blssg mr genuine

שלא עשני אשה(מספר ה<u>מצוות)</u>

שלא עשני אשה(מספר המצוות)