


MAKE YOUR MARRIAGE WORK



A Jew's home should be suffused with a loving atmosphere. This booklet offers valuable advice on how to make such a home and encouragement to those who have not yet attained it.

Written by the holy tzaddik
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Printed by:

**Keren Hadfusa
of Breslev**

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MAKE YOUR MARRIAGE WORK

— ❖ 1 ❖ —

You want to live a good life. You want your home to be a paradise. You want to feel satisfied and happy.

The very first step is to try to understand your spouse. We all have feelings. Never hurt your spouse's feelings. To the contrary, always try to help him or her and not hurt his or her feelings.

When you act this way, you will succeed. The basis of a successful marriage is that each partner in the marriage understand: Just as I have feelings, so does my spouse have feelings.

You can hurt your spouse very easily. So be extra-sensitive to your spouse's feelings. Be sure to treat your spouse with respect. Then your

marriage will work. Your home will be a warm, peaceful, satisfying oasis.

You may have complaints about your spouse. But realize that your spouse has feelings, and you must be very careful not to offend them. Once you realize that, you won't have any more arguments.

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Let us deal with one topic as an example — in-laws. You want your spouse to honor your parents, and your spouse wants the same from you.

You may have very good reasons for speaking badly about your in-laws. Your spouse may agree with you that you're right. But underneath the surface you've hurt your spouse's feelings. In the end, no matter how right you are, this is, after all, your spouse's family. Your spouse has a strong, natural attachment to his or her family, which won't change.

The minute you attack your spouse's parents, you're attacking your spouse's feelings. Then your spouse will hurt inside, and that will smolder into arguments, until your marriage can go to pieces.

So no matter how strong the provocation, be

firm with yourself, and don't hurt your spouse's feelings.

Whatever problems you have, try to understand your spouse. Keep your in-laws out of your private lives. Just deal with each other, and treat each other with respect.

That's the way to succeed and to fill your home with peace.



When you got married, you and your spouse became partners. You can't go blaming each other for everything.

You may think that you're 100 percent right and your spouse is totally wrong. That isn't true, though. Now you're partners. If there's any blame, you've both got to share it. Accept responsibility for your part of the marriage. Then your marriage will succeed.

How does a fight start? Something unpleasant happens, and the husband and wife start blaming each other. Often, neither is to blame. But out of frustration and tension, one starts to blame the other. And then the couple squabbles over nothing.

You're partners with your spouse, and you can't

throw all the blame on him or her. Instead, try to help your spouse in every part of your shared life: in the housework, in finances, in bringing up the children. And take on the responsibility of trying to understand your spouse.

Then you will be most satisfied couple in the world, and your home will be filled with peace.



Whenever you become angry, go out for a walk and clear your mind. It's very easy for you and your spouse not to see things eye to eye, to see each other's faults, to get into arguments over nothing. And once you start a fight, it's natural that you'll blame your spouse and dig up your spouse's faults.

So if you're in a bad mood, leave the house before a fight starts.

Then, instead of fighting with your spouse, you'll tell him or her positive, encouraging things. Then the atmosphere in your home will really be like paradise. You'll be a living example to your children and to everyone around you of how a husband and wife can live together in harmony.

A home starts to fall apart when one of the couple starts to vent his or her anger and bad

moods on the other. Then both spouses lose their peace of mind and their life is in ruins. They can hardly attend to their affairs; when they go to the synagogue, they can't concentrate on the prayers; when they learn some Torah, they can hardly focus on the words — their whole lives become concentrated on their arguments and their bad feelings. They lose this world, and the World-to-Come.

But follow this advice, and you'll gain both worlds. You'll have this world — a loving home with mutual understanding between you and your wife; and the World-to-Come — your faith in G-d will become stronger.



Help your spouse out; work together on your marriage. Don't sabotage your spouse — don't degrade or insult him or her; that will tear your marriage apart.

True, you may have legitimate complaints. But if your first priority is a warm, close marriage, you have to learn to give in sometimes and to pitch in and work together with your spouse.

It's natural and to be expected that not a day will go by that you and your spouse won't have some disagreements and differences of opinion.

But when you discuss these in an atmosphere of clear communication, unclouded by emotions and blaming, you can come to mutually acceptable solutions, and you can draw closer to each other than you were ever before. Then your marriage will really be successful, and you will rejoice in having a warm and comforting home.

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You and your spouse are full partners. Just as two business partners can succeed only if they're straight with each other, so can you and your spouse succeed only if you are faithful to each other. If you aren't, your marriage will fall apart.

Always encourage your spouse. Whatever happens in your home, take part in it with the responsibility of a full partner. If something good happened, take part in celebrating, and if something bad happened, G-d forbid, accept your share in dealing with it. Don't throw all the responsibility and blame on your partner.

When you and your spouse each accepts the role of being a full partner, your marriage will succeed. Your home will be a paradise on earth.

In addition, your children will be healthy, in body and in soul. Children are deeply influenced by what they see as they grow up.

When they see you and your spouse in a committed relationship, treating each other lovingly and respectfully and never blaming each other for anything, they'll absorb this into themselves, and they will grow up acting the same way.

When you treat your spouse with respect and commit yourself to be a responsible partner in your marriage relationship, you will be happy, and your children will grow up happy and will themselves produce happy families.



You and your spouse are interdependent.

Our Rabbis said, "It is impossible for the man to exist without his wife, and it is impossible for the woman to exist without her husband; and it is impossible for both of them to exist without G-d's Presence."¹

You need your spouse, your spouse needs you, and both of you need G-d. You should both pray to G-d for your spouse's good and for your children's success. Pray together with your spouse.

1. Jerusalem Talmud. *Berachot* 9.

Our Rabbis said, “Issac used to stand in one corner of the house and pray for children, and his wife Rebecca would stand in another corner and pray.”²

You and your spouse should be partners even in your prayers. Then you will draw G-d’s Presence into your home. When two people are united, G-d’s Presence comes to them; and this is especially so when it comes to a family.

So, every day, see that you and your spouse pray to G-d in your own words. Ask Him to help your marriage succeed: ask Him for a healthy, happy, productive life, and for successful, healthy children.

Prayer can accomplish what nothing else can. This is especially true when a husband and wife join together in shared prayer. Their words to G-d create a great spiritual light, and G-d’s Presence rests on their home.



Happiness cures many domestic problems; it brings G-d’s Presence into the house; and it brings success with it.

2. *Midrash Rabbah, Toldot.*

Always cheer up your spouse, so that your home is filled with a happy atmosphere.

This will also help your children mature quickly. In a happy home, people are calm and thoughtful. No one is tense and depressed. And in this atmosphere, children develop healthfully. The happiness they experience is the most important vitamin you could ever give them.

So always bring a spirit of happiness into your home.

Our Rabbis said, “A woman’s husband makes her happy,”³ and also “A man without a wife isn’t happy.”⁴ Here you see that both the husband and the wife contribute happiness to the marriage.

When you work to fill your home with joy, you will succeed both in your day-to-day activities, and in your spiritual pursuits.

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Our Rabbi’s said, “If a husband and wife are worthy, G-d’s Presence dwells with them; but if not, a fire devours them.”⁵

3. *Rosh Hashanah* 6a.

4. *Yevamot* 62a.

5. *Sotah* 17a.

In Hebrew, the word for “man” is *Ish*, spelled *aleph, yud, shin*. The Hebrew for woman is *Ishah* — *aleph, shin, hey*. The *yud* of *ish* and the *hey* of *ishah*, when joined, form the Name of G-d that refers to His Presence.

When a man and wife follow the laws of the Torah and serve G-d, then G-d’s Presence — as symbolized by the letters *yud* and *hey* — dwells among them, and they live in harmony.

But if they don’t follow the way of the Torah, then the letters of G-d’s Name — the *yud* and *hey* — fly away; what is left in the man’s name is *aleph shin*, and in the woman’s name also, *aleph shin*. And *aleph shin* spells *aysh* — fire.

Then they burn each other and cause terrible destruction.

When a fire rages, it goes out of control. When this fire starts to blaze, it burns everyone it touches — even the innocent. When a man and wife start fighting, the flame of their hostility spreads to engulf their children, their parents, the entire family, the neighbors — everyone.

Therefore, keep the laws of the Torah carefully; in particular, the laws of family purity. Then G-d’s Presence, symbolized in the letters *yud* and *hey*, will dwell with you and your spouse. Then you and your spouse will live in peace, for G-d’s

Name is peace,⁶ and peace and harmony are an indication of the Presence of G-d.

When a husband and wife are fortunate enough to live in this fashion, G-d's Presence will permeate their acts.



You and your spouse are an indivisible unit. Our Rabbis said, "A woman is like her husband, and the man is like his wife."⁷ Just as a person can't remove a part of his being, so are a husband and wife united — if they act according to the guidance of the Torah.

Our Rabbis said on the verse, "Two are better than one"⁸ that "a married couple is better than unmarried individuals."⁹

When a husband and wife are united and follow the Torah, they are as one. Then G-d is with them, for He goes where people keep His Torah. Then G-d saves the couple from all problems. As our Rabbis said, "G-d placed His Name in the married couple [as explained above, in section 9].

6. *Shabbat* 10b.

7. *Menachot* 93b.

8. Ecclesiastes 4:9.

9. *Kohelet Rabbah* 4.

He says 'If they go in My way, My Name is with them and saves them from all troubles. If not, I remove My Name and only fire is left behind.'¹⁰

So be united. Support each other. Fulfill the verse, "Therefore a man will leave his father and mother and cling to his wife, so they become as one being."¹¹ Unite with your spouse in love and friendship, guided by the Torah. Then you and your spouse will enjoy a good, genuinely loving relationship for the rest of your lives.

Our Rabbis said, "When a person loves his wife as himself and shows her more honor than he shows himself, the verse 'And you will experience peace in your dwelling' applies to him."¹² Elsewhere, they said, "When a person loves his wife as himself and shows her more honor than he shows himself, and he leads his sons and daughters on the straight path, and marries them off at an early age, the verse 'And you will experience peace in your dwelling' applies to him."¹³

Fortunate is the person who acts according to everything written here. Then his home will be permeated with peace.

10. *Yalkut Bereishit* 24.

11. *Genesis* 2:24.

12. *Yevamot* 62b.

13. *Sanhedrin* 76b.

The Torah View of Women excerpted from Sichot Moharosh

All the high spiritual levels discussed in the Jewish Holy Books can be reached by women just as they can by men. Women, like men, can attain the highest spiritual levels. The book *Tanna Devei Eliyahu* mentions, for instance, that woman can experience Divine inspiration (*Ruach Hakodesh*).¹⁴ And in the course of history, many women have experienced such inspiration, prophecy, and other higher states of consciousness.

Two such women were Edel, the daughter of the Baal Shem Tov, and Feiga, the mother of Rabbi Nachman, whose brothers called her “Feiga the Prophet.” Throughout his life, Rabbi Nachman expressed his gratitude to her for all she had done for him. From before his conception to after his birth, she prayed to G-d for his sake. Rabbi Nachman expressed his gratitude by calling himself after her name — Rabbi Nachman, son of Feiga — rather than after his father’s name, which is the custom.

Women’s high level can be inferred from the great responsibility they have in vital areas of Jewish life: keeping the home kosher and raising the children.

14. Chapter 4.

The bedrock of a person's service of G-d is the food he eats. This is the woman's responsibility.

Also, the cornerstone of the transmission of Torah is the education of the young. It is the woman who is with the children for the greater part of the day. She has the responsibility of teaching them faith in G-d, and telling them stories that inculcate faith in Him, and teaching them the basics of Torah, such as making blessings on food and saying *Shema*.

If women didn't have the necessary abilities to give children the proper appreciation of Torah, G-d wouldn't have given them this task.

Women are mistaken to think that the Torah views them as second-class citizens.

The reason they are exempt from a number of commandments is that their responsibility to take care of the family and raise the children takes precedence. Since this takes a great deal of time, women are exempt from commandments that are to be observed at particular times. But the reason is not that they are regarded as being inferior.

The philosophy of women's liberation is false, and has caused many problems. Men have their natural role, and women theirs. It is the nature of a man to go out into the world. Our Rabbis

said, “A man’s nature is to conquer.”¹⁵ A woman’s nature is to take care of the home and to guide the children. This constitutes her beauty. As the Psalm says, “The honor of the king’s daughter is inward.”¹⁶ When people want to change these natural roles, so the man will sit at home and the woman concentrate on her job, then problems arise. Home life is adversely affected, and the children aren’t properly brought up. Then the entire foundation of Torah values is undermined.

Some men abandon their responsibility and place the burden of financially supporting the family on their wives. But this is not part of the Jewish tradition. The *ketubah* — the marriage document — stipulates, in the husband’s name, “I will work and support you” — he must support her, and not the other way around. If the woman wants to support the family so that her husband can learn Torah full-time, she is on a very high level. But if not, the husband has no right to force the responsibility on her.

Many women wonder if, according to Torah, their role is considered as important as that of men. If it is, why do men every day recite the blessing, “Blessed are You, G-d ... for not making me a woman,” and woman recite “Blessed are

15. *Yevamot* 65b.

16. Psalms 45:14.

You, G-d ... for making me according to Your will"? Apparently, the woman's role is viewed as inferior.

But this is a mistake. To the contrary, the woman's blessing is on a higher level than the man's. Men say, "for not making me a woman" to thank G-d for not making them passive receivers. Most women are receivers; they look to their husbands for their support, for children, and so on. A person who is always receiving from others is not in a good state. If he has to be alone, he is very bitter. That is what the blessing, "for not making me a woman," refers to.

But really, a woman who is dynamic and strong-willed, and who acts assertively and asks G-d to give her and her family all that they need, transcends that state and becomes independent. She can then bestow things to others and help them. This is, in fact, the level women are meant to reach.¹⁷

Women say, "for making me according to Your will." This is the supernal and awesome blessing. The woman puts herself completely in G-d's hands. She nullifies herself before G-d's supernal will. This is the very highest level for which everyone must strive in this world — to nullify

17. See *Likutei Moharan* 73.

oneself before G-d's will and to be swallowed up completely in G-d's infinite light.¹⁸ This blessing is, therefore, very high and spiritual, and woman should recite it with great feeling and joy.

In Kabbalah, the flow of Divine energy is conceptualized as traveling through various conduits, called *sefirot*. There is a group of six such *sefirot* (in downward order: Love, Sternness, Beauty, Eternity, Glory, Foundation), which correspond to the male. The next and final *sefirah*, Kingship, is the repository of all the qualities in the six previous *sefirot*, and corresponds to the female.

We see, then, that the woman contains within herself all the spiritual qualities of the six preceding *sefirot*. A man, on the other hand, is limited to being influenced deeply by only one of these *sefirot*; which one may depend on his personality. A woman's spiritual level is very high. She has access to all these *sefirot*, and thus has tremendous potential.

The great sixteenth century Kabbalist, the Arizal, taught that the purpose of creation is that the *sefirah* of Kingship attain an independent status.¹⁹ It is the goal of women to become

18. See *Likutei Moharan* 4.

19. See the Arizal's writing regarding Rosh Hashanah; see also *Likutei Halachot*, Rosh Chodesh 5.

independent and to cling directly to G-d, and thus to obtain all spiritual goodness.



Gevald!!! Never give up hope.

It is forbidden for one to give up hope.

It is a very great mitzvah for one to be constantly happy.

Meditation is a very high level. In fact, it is above all other levels.

If you believe that you can damage, believe that you can correct.

Know that a person walks in life on a very narrow bridge. The most important rule is not to be afraid.

Even when things appear to be at their worst, it can instantly turn around for the person's full benefit.

One must always look for the good points in every single Jew.

