

TORAH'S SECURITY BAIS!

by Rabbi Label Lam

And Moshe ascended to G-d, and HASHEM called to him from the mountain, saying, "So shall you should say to Bais (the House of) Yaakov and tell to the Sons of Israel" (Shemos 19:3)

Bais Yaakov: These are the women! (Rashi)

In preparation them for the earth-shaking all-time event of the giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai, Moshe is told by HASHEM to speak to the Bais Yaakov- the women and then to the "Sons of Israel". Is there any significance to the order? Why is the first address to be the women?

Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch ztl. asks the same question in the name of the Midrash and answers as follows: "We see that when G-d entrusted to us the "Aish Das"- "Fire-Law", that pledges the salvation for all mankind, He counted first of all on the support of the women. Before all else, He thought of our children, the future generation in every age. And because all our hopes are based on our ability to win our children for His Law, He addressed Himself first to those upon whose breast, upon whose knee and by whose hands the budding men and women of the future develop into human beings. Therefore He spoke to the women "so that they might lead their children to the Torah." Once He won over the mothers, the entire nation would be His...

Our mothers are not expected to give their children theoretical instruction in the Law of G-d. But what G-d does expect primarily of our women is that they train their children and lead them to the Law in such a manner, and imbue them with such sentiments, attitudes and high resolve, that that they will regard the theoretical knowledge and the practical observance of G-d's Law as their life's purpose, not to be supplanted or outflanked by any other consideration. The mothers of the "House of Jacob" will train their children to walk with all their heart and soul, with zeal and diligence, to the living waters of Torah study, drawing upon them assiduously and with ever-growing delight. Reflect for a moment, if you will, on the extent to which G-d has thereby entrusted the entire future of His people to its women."

The Bais Yaakov-The House of Yaakov in every generation is the repository of the future of the Torah. It is like the Holy Ark. Therefore being a part of Bais Yaakov is a noble distinction. It brings into focus the import of the home. It's no wonder then that one sage in the Talmud said, "I never called my wife my wife but rather my 'Bais'-house!" What could he mean by that?

Original Hebrew is a Holy Language. Although western letters and characters are ideographic, that is

they are merely signals or triggers for certain sounds, their shapes and the names of letters are arbitrary. The eastern languages are pictographic. The word for a house is a picture of a house but how to pronounce it is a matter of oral tradition. In Loshon HaKodesh each letter has a pronunciation but the names of the letters mean something, and the shapes are telling too. The letter VUV" looks like a hook. It means a hook. It is used grammatically to connect ideas and tenses like hook. The Zohar calls it the letter of knowledge because it joins together as one who knows a thing is intimate with that which he knows.

The letter "Bais" looks like a basic house with a floor and a roof. It means "house". As a prefix though "Bais" means "in" which is consistent with how the word- "Bais" is first used in Chumash. When Noach was putting the sealant to secure the Ark from the turbulent waters, the Torah says that he put it "MiBais U' BaChutz" -"from on the inside and outside". "Bais" is the inside of the ark. The letter "PEH" looks like a profile of a face with a mouth and means mouth. The letter PEH first starts in Torah..."Pnei"- Surface and when it is written in a Sefer Torah or a Mezuza or a Megilla inside the black of the "PEH" is a white letter "BAIS". Therefore that sage that called his wife his "BAIS"- meant that she is the essence of the inner home not the outer brick and mortar. And so that space is our **Torah's security Bais!** DvarTorah, Copyright © 2007 by Rabbi Label Lam and Torah.org.