



Carnegie Shul Chatter

July 19, 2017



The Jewish Woman

I was talking to a friend the other day who is a member of a Reform temple. We were discussing Orthodoxy, and he mentioned that he doesn't like to attend Orthodox services because he doesn't like the way Orthodoxy treats women.

"It's not just the *mechitza* (the barrier that separates men's seating from women's seating), it is also that they treat women as chattel, the property of men," he said.

I must admit that I am not fond of the *mechitza* either because I do like to sit with my wife at services, but does Orthodoxy really treat women as chattel?

It is true that, in the traditional marriage vows, the groom does say, "With this ring, you are wedded to me in accordance with the laws of Moses and Israel," and the bride says nothing similar. It's also true that the man must grant the woman a *get* for a divorce, and both of these conditions would make it appear that the man "owns" the woman.

Add to that the fact that women in Orthodoxy do not count towards a minyan, cannot become rabbis, and do not receive aliyahs, and I can understand why some would frown upon Orthodoxy's treatment of women.

At the Carnegie Shul, we have a service and follow many practices that border upon Orthodoxy, but our women sit with the men, and women are eligible for aliyahs, although most refuse to accept.

Women in Shul

I must admit that when the Board of our shul, several years ago, voted to allow women to receive aliyahs I was not in full agreement.

I attended a very conservative shul growing up, and women did not receive aliyahs and did not count towards minyan. There were traditional rules for women and traditional rules for men, and never the twain shall meet.

But the Board made a decision and the world has not come to an end, although I must admit that I'm still not totally comfortable with women in tallises, but so far that rarely happens at our Sul.

Are women less important than men in Judaism? Well, there are heroines Ruth, and Esther, and Miriam, and Sarah, and Rebecca, and Rachel, and Leah, and Hannah, and Judith, to name just a few.

Jewish women -- where would Jewish men be without them?

Hammerin' Hank Greenberg

Two years ago it was a Leon Zions concert. Last year it was Klezmer Magic. This year, the Carnegie Shul, in conjunction with South Hills Jewish Pittsburgh, is sponsoring something different, a screening of the Peabody Award-winning film, *The Life and Times of Hank Greenberg*.

Plan to join us August 30 at the Hollywood Theater in Dormont. Check out the poster in this Chatter for more details.

Interestingly, however, the women have developed a tradition in which women open and close the ark every week for the recitation of the Alenu prayer.

Yes, there are indeed differences between what Orthodox Judaism requires of men and women, but is it all bad? Although men must follow many mitzvahs involving prayer and the synagogue, dating back to practices in the ancient Temple, women also have very, very important responsibilities in Judaism involving the Jewish home and raising Jewish children.

And the respect that Jewish men are expected to have for their wives is beautifully demonstrated in most Orthodox homes every Sabbath evening when the husband sings *Eishet Chayil*, *A Woman of Valor*, to his wife.

Here is an article by Mrs. Lori Palatnik, writing at aish.com, about being a Jewish woman, a woman of valor:

Eishet Chayil, a Special Shabbat Song in Honor of the Jewish Woman

The Jewish woman. If not for her, the Jewish people would still be enslaved in Egypt.

When Pharaoh decreed that all first-born Jewish males should die, the men decided to refrain from relations with their wives so as not to bring any more children into this world. The women realized that God would indeed save them and bring them out of Egypt, so they went to their husbands in order to bring more Jewish children into the world. Their faith and foresight were said to have merited the redemption from Egypt of the entire Jewish people.

The Jewish woman. The one who was offered the Torah first from Moses. After Moses received the Torah from God at Mount Sinai, he offered it first to the Jewish women, for he knew that if they accepted it, it would become part of the Jewish people for all time.

The Jewish woman. Who, in the face of adversity, held steadfast to her trust in the Almighty, even when those around her did not. While the Jewish people wandered



through the desert, the men repeatedly complained to Moses and even asked to go back to Egypt. And, when Jewish spies were sent in to the Land of Israel and came back with reports of great dangers, it was the men who refused to enter. Forty years later, only the women of that generation merited entering the land.

The Jewish woman. Who time and time again saved the Jewish people through her insightfulness, virtue, and belief in God. There are many examples, one being Rebecca, who helped disguise her son Jacob so that her husband, Isaac, would bestow a blessing upon him and not upon Jacob's brother, Esau. She knew that it was Jacob who had the character to become the father of the Jewish people. Later, it was his 12 sons who led The Tribes of Israel.

The Jewish woman. In whose merit will come the Messiah and the final redemption of the Jewish people. (Talmud - Sotah 11)

The Jewish woman, who today is the one entrusted with the responsibility of maintaining the three mitzvot central to the Jewish home: kashrut, Shabbat, and mikvah.

If not for her, where would we be? There would be no home, no family... no Jewish people. On Friday night, she sits as the queen of her table, while all those around her sing her praises. And rightly so.

She is the Eishet Chayil, the Woman of Valor, who sets the tone of love, spirituality, and personal growth for all those around her. To know her is to appreciate her strength and talents. And, just in case you might happen to forget, "Eishet Chayil" is there as a weekly reminder.

These words are found in the Book of Proverbs (31:10-31), and accredited to King Solomon.

Sing it with feeling for your own Eishet Chayil, or to the Eishet Chayils that were the foundation of the Jewish people for thousands of years and continue to be so today.

How To

1. Although only a custom, "Eishet Chayil" is sung at every Shabbat table throughout the world.
2. If no women are present, "Eishet Chayil" is still sung in praise of Jewish women everywhere.
3. If no men are present, the women sing it in praise of Jewish womanhood.

In other words, no matter what, sing "Eishet Chayil"!

The Song

A Woman of Valor, who can find? She is more precious than corals.

Her husband places his trust in her and profits only thereby. She brings him good, not harm, all the days of her life.



She seeks out wool and flax and cheerfully does the work of her hands.

She is like the trading ships, bringing food from afar.

She gets up while it is still night to provide food for her household, and a fair share for her staff.

She considers a field and purchases it, and plants a vineyard with the fruit of her labors.

She invests herself with strength and makes her arms powerful.

She senses that her trade is profitable; her light does not go out at night.

She stretches out her hands to the distaff and her palms hold the spindle.

She opens her hands to the poor and reaches out her hands to the needy.

She has no fear of the snow for her household, for all her household is dressed in fine clothing.

She makes her own bedspreads; her clothing is of fine linen and luxurious cloth.

Her husband is known at the gates, where he sits with the elders of the land.

She makes and sells linens; she supplies the merchants with sashes.

She is robed in strength and dignity, and she smiles at the future.

She opens her mouth with wisdom and a lesson of kindness is on her tongue.

She looks after the conduct of her household and never tastes the bread of laziness.

Her children rise up and make her happy; her husband praises her:

"Many women have excelled, but you excell them all!"

Grace is elusive and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears God -- she shall be praised.

Give her credit for the fruit of her labors, and let her achievements praise her at the gates.

Yahrzeit Plaques

A wonderful way to commemorate loved ones is to dedicate a yahrzeit plaque in their memory at the Carnegie Shul. These beautiful plaques, which are mounted on the walls of the sanctuary, are lit on the anniversary of a loved one's yahrzeit, on Yom Kippur, and on days when Yizkor is recited. The names are also read aloud from the Bimah during services on the Sabbath of the yahrzeit and on Yom Kippur. To purchase a plaque in memory of a loved one, for only \$175, please email Mike Roteman at mrmike7777@yahoo.com.



Each Shabbat, after services, we join together to make Kiddush and Hamotzi and to share a repast that often includes herring, lox, bagels, and desserts. Please consider sponsoring a Kiddush as an honorarium or a memoriam. The cost is only \$36 and your sponsorship will be announced from the bimah and in the weekly Chatter. To sponsor a Kiddush, please email Mike Roteman at mrmike7777@yahoo.com.



The Life and Times of Hank Greenberg



Wednesday, August 30
7 pm

Doors open 6:30

The Hollywood Theater

1449 Potomac Avenue, Dormont
Free on-street parking after 6 pm

Free and open to the public

Free popcorn and soda

For tickets:

Visit www.southhillsjewishpittsburgh.org

It's not just a baseball movie!

As Hitler invaded Europe, a young Jewish baseball player, Hammerin' Hank Greenberg, challenged Babe Ruth's homerun record and became an American hero.

The Life and Times of Hank Greenberg is a sometimes humorous and often nostalgic documentary about how this Detroit Tiger (and later Pittsburgh Pirate) became a beacon of hope to American Jews, who faced bigotry during the Depression and World War II, and how he became a genuine American hero.

"You don't have to be Jewish to find it thoroughly engrossing and rewarding. You don't even have to know baseball!"
— Jay Carr, Boston Globe



Presented by
Congregation Ahavath Achim
(The Carnegie Shul)
in cooperation with
South Hills Jewish Pittsburgh



Winner of
★ The Peabody Award
★ Critics Choice Award
★ National Society of Film Critics Award

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