

Women & Family Unit

of the world during the month of February, to chart the course of their discussions and resolutions to be implemented in their respective communities.

"Some families have fallen prey to social and economic pressures to the point of almost total disintegration. In some families the father is completely engrossed in the quest for material success, and the mother looks for interests in search of misconceived personal fulfillment -- at the expense of the family. Children are placed in care of hired help, and their education and character training is left devoid of religious content. Even in families that are Torah abiding, parents often attend one Synagogue and their children another. Though all may study Torah and observe the Mitzvos, which is, of course, to the good, it cannot be compared to all acting together as a family unit, instead of separate entities."

The Rebbe called for renewed emphasis on the meaning of "Honor your father and mother" -- on the children's part, and "Teach them diligently to your children" -- on the parent's part.

"As a first step" toward remedying this situation, the Rebbe suggested that families spend the Sabbath and Holidays together. "There are always affairs and interests that separate the members of a family during the weekdays. Father has his business, mother her concerns, while son and daughter have their own matters. This is sometimes inevitable and not at all deplorable. But when the time comes for the Sabbath meal the family should be together. The divisive weekday factors are absent then.

"Jewish women have a unique function, responsibility and privilege," the Rebbe continued. "The true family depends almost completely on the mother. If her function is weakened or denigrated, then efforts by the rest of the family are doomed to being ineffectual. She must bring the family warmth and closeness and heart.

"What then is the compelling concern and question of the day? Is it to tear a woman still further from her unique and primary responsibility as the foundation of the home? Is her concern to be whether she will get an Aliyah to the Torah, or to be counted to a M'nyan? Or will she be elected Gabbai in the Synagogue, or can she be a Cantor or Rabbi? Should this be the focus of so much zeal and communal attention? Should she not rather consider deeply and seriously her critical responsibility, one that shall determine the future of the entire Jewish people, her responsibility of welding her family into a family, so that her children need not seek warmth elsewhere?

"It is noteworthy," the Rebbe said, "that the Biblical census of the fledgling Jewish people on its way from Egypt to the Promised Land, repeatedly refers to the term 'by their families'. It was as families that they were counted, and not merely as individuals."



LUBAVITCHER REBBE

NEW YORK (LNS) -- "We witness a catastrophic situation, all too prevalent today, where father and mother, son and daughter, live in four separate worlds. There is recognition of the devastation of family life, and awareness of the huge number of priceless young lives forfeited because there was no family, because their family lacked the family quality," said the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, the world leader of the Lubavitcher movement, in speaking of the collapse of the family unit and calling for the resurrection of the family structure.

The Rebbe devoted large segments of his recent public addresses to the importance of the family unit and the primary role of the woman in maintaining and nurturing it. The Rebbe's remarks, heard live in Lubavitch Centers around the world by special communications hookup, were regarded as being primarily intended for the three major conventions of Lubavitcher women being held in different parts

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