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THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE TORAH. The rabbis have always taught that women are endowed with a greater degree of "binah" (intuition, understanding, intelligence) than men. The rabbis inferred this from the fact that woman was "built" (Beresheth (Genesis) 2:22) rather than "formed" (Beresheth (Genesis) 2:7), and the Hebrew root of "build" has the same consonants as the word "binah." It has been said that the matriarchs (Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah) were superior to the patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) in prophecy. Women did not participate in the idolatry regarding the Golden Calf. Women have held positions of respect in Judaism since biblical times. Miriam is considered one of the liberators of the Children of Yisra'el, along with her brothers Moses and Aaron. One of the Judges (Deborah) was a woman. Seven of the 55 prophets of the Bible were women (they are included in the list of biblical prophets).

THE ROLE. The role of the woman in the Torah is generally misunderstood. The position of women in the Torah is not as lowly as people think. The Torah holds the role of woman in high esteem and forbids the mistreatment of a woman. The rights of women are protected by Torah Halakah (biblical custom). In a custom that dates back to the time of Avraham, the woman's matrimonial and property rights were guaranteed to her in a parchment called the Ketubah, which replaced the mahor – the price paid by the groom to the bride, or her parents, for the marriage (i.e., the bride price). Women's rights in traditional Judaism are much greater than in the rest of Western civilization until the 20th century. Women had the right to buy, sell, own property, and make their own contracts, rights that women in Western countries (including America) did not have until about 100 years ago. In fact, Mishle (Proverbs) 31:10-31, which is traditionally read on the eve of the Shabbat day by a man to his wife and at Jewish weddings, repeatedly speaks of business acumen as a trait to be prized in women (v. 11, 13, 16, and 18 especially). I believe women make better business managers and leaders than men because they innately consider the impact of business decisions on the family and society. Men tend to be concerned with perfecting the systems and maximising profit. However, the crown of women's rights is the Ketubah.

THE KETUVAH. Today, the Ketubah or Ketubah is the blueprint or manual of how the marriage must be. The Ketubah is a legal document in Israel that guarantees women legal rights of property and provision in the event that the husband is no longer present for reasons including divorce, desertion, or death. It is like a marriage contract and an estate will in one document. The Ketubah is equivalent to what we call today in some Western countries as a "prenuptial agreement," but it is not the same thing. A Ketubah is essentially a spiritual document that addresses the needs of the whole person. The Ketubah is by no means a modern marriage arrangement but a very ancient practice that dates back to when Avraham (Abraham) betrothed Sarai. What is modern is the Lieberman clause that was added to the traditional Aramaic text, which states that 'In the event of a divorce, the couple agrees to go before the Rabbinic Assembly and abide by their decision regarding the divorce if either partner does not comply, they can be taken to a civil court for enforcement of the decree.' The intention is to give the wife a civil remedy if the husband refuses to give her a "get," which is a Jewish divorce, an action that would prevent her from entering into another Jewish marriage in the future. The Rabbinic or Priestly Assembly is highly qualified in the area of marital issues and problems; therefore, it is able to give sound collective guidance to save the marriage. Statistics prove that Jews who are married with a Ketubah are less likely to get a divorce, and those who choose to marry in the modern way have a higher divorce rate. There are two parts to a Jewish wedding: the kiddushin (betrothal) and nissuin, which means elevation (the consummation). In the past, the kiddushin and nissuin would routinely occur as much as a year apart. During that time, the husband would prepare a home for the new family while his betrothed would prepare herself for the husband. Today, the two ceremonies are normally performed together. The Ketubah, written in

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Aramaic, which is signed during the betrothal, details the husband's obligations to his wife. His principal obligations are to provide his wife with food, shelter, and clothing and to be attentive to her emotional needs. It also creates a lien on all his property to pay her a sum of money and support should he divorce her or predecease her. The Ketuvah also states the marital relations the wife should give her husband and vice versa. Protecting the rights of the wife is so important that the marriage may not be solemnized until the contract has been completed. The document is signed by the groom and witnessed by two people. It has the standing of a legally binding agreement that is enforceable by secular law in many countries. The Ketuvah is the property of the kallah (the bride), and she must have access to it throughout their marriage. The Ketuvah is often written as an illuminated manuscript and becomes a work of art in itself, and many couples frame it and display it in their home. In Semitic culture, the groom does not choose the bride and vice versa. We see this pattern in the first marriage that YHWH performed in Eden. The Torah tells us that it was YHWH after He had created Chavah (Eve) and brought Chavah to Adam, but it was not Adam who found Chavah. *"Then the rib which YHWH Elohim had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man"* Beresheet (Genesis) 2:22. Adam was allowed many choices in the Garden; he chose all the names for the birds of the air, the beast of the fields, and the herbs and plants of the Garden. But he was not permitted to choose his mate. That decision was in the sole sovereignty of YHWH. This pattern is a Semitic principle that is embedded in Hebrew culture. The Jewish people believe that one's spouse is chosen by Elohim and not by man. In Hebrew, there is a concept called "bashert," a word meaning fate or destiny, when it is used in the context of a marriage. According to Rav Yehuda (a Jewish teacher), there is a Jewish belief that 40 days before a male child is conceived, a voice from Heaven announces whose daughter he is going to marry, literally a match made in Heaven! And while we're on the subject of YHWH arranging marriages, I should share this delightful Midrash (Teaching): it is said that a Roman woman asked a rabbi (teacher) if your G-d created the universe in six days, then what has he been doing with his time since then? The rabbi said that G-d has been arranging marriages. The Roman woman scoffed at this, saying that arranging marriages was a simple task, but the rabbi assured her that arranging marriages properly is as difficult as parting the Red Sea. To prove the rabbi wrong, the Roman woman went home and took a thousand male slaves and a thousand female slaves and matched them up in marriages. The next day, the slaves appeared before her, one with a cracked skull, another with a broken leg, another with his eye gouged out, all asking to be released from their marriages. The woman went back to the rabbi and said, "There is no god like your G-d, and your Torah is true." A perfect example of the application of this principle of "divine selection" in the Torah is the selection of Yitzchak's (Isaac) wife, Rebekah. When the time came for Isaac to marry, Avraham (Abraham) sent his servant Eliezer of Damascus (Genesis 15:2) to Mesopotamia, to the city of Nahor where his brother Bethuel lived, to find his son a bride. (Genesis 24:15) This was certainly not an impetuous or unplanned decision on the part of Avraham. It was Heaven's doing, and Avraham understood his part in YHWH's Plan. It was Avraham who chose Yitzchak's wife. In this story, Avraham represents YHWH and Isaac, His bride. Avraham, being the father of Isaac, held the authority to choose the bride for his son, and the son willingly submitted to his father's authority. This is a Semitic culture, and we see this pattern operating among many Middle Eastern cultures today where the father, with the help of the mother, decides whom their sons and daughters marry. The humility is in the son surrendering to his father's will. Hence, the secret of the Ketubah is our submission, but to whom? SUBMISSION. Submission is a word that is very much abused in society today. The New Testament requires women to submit first to Elohim (Yaakov (James 4:7) and second to each other

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(Qolesayah (Colossians) 3), which is close to the Torah, but there is a stronger emphasis on the wife submitting to the husband, usually with the idea of the woman being a doormat or of some inferior position. Many people do not realize that when the was given, women, as well as men, were commanded to receive the Torah from YHWH. And both conjointly agreed to obey it. *"Gather the people together, **men, and women, and children**, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear YHWH your Elohim, and observe to do all the words of this law"* Devarim (Deuteronomy) 31:12. *"And he read therein before the street that was before the water gate from the morning until midday, before **the men and the women**, and those that could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law"* Nechemyah (Nehemiah) 8:3. Women heard and accepted the Torah alongside the men. In this day and age, it is usually the woman who maintains a Torah-based home and most strongly influences her children to grow up fearing YHWH. I have followed a program on our National Television with great interest because it clearly interprets the meaning of submission when taken to its extreme. The program is called Tribal Wives. Women from England travel to remote tribes in Ecuador and Panama and live with the tribes for a month they are to immerse themselves in the culture. The women of the Waorani Tribe of Ecuador undergo an operation removing the female sexual part of their vagina at ten years old so that the female may never have the same experience as a male does during sexual intercourse. The beating of the wife is common practice in this tribe, and while it was the task of the men to hunt for food, the women did all the work around the village, while much of the time the men spent sleeping. The Kuna Tribe of Panama was quite the opposite from the Waorani Tribe in that the women were not put through the harrowing, painful experience of having a sexual part of the vagina removed; instead, they had four of their bottom teeth pulled out at the age of ten. Primitive tools are used to extract the teeth, causing excruciating pain to a young child. This practice is done for the beautification of the women for the men. The girls are married at the age of 12; in the program, a 12-year-old was to be married; she was fearful and crying with deep anguish and had to be dragged to the marriage ceremony. In the same tribe, women are not to make a noise while giving birth; it's considered to be an act of cowardness. Men have more than one wife, and women have boyfriends that they have when the husband is away. As we evaluate submission in the context of these two tribes, we see that submission in its true form is based on **ignorance** and **control**. Where there is no Torah (the instructions of Moshe), the guidelines that YHWH gave to His people to live out their lives with knowledge, wisdom, and understanding in every aspect of our lives, man is then open to inventing his own set of laws and rules. While these two cases may appear extreme and barbaric in our modern society, women today still suffer doctrinematic and systematic controls exerted upon them through religion and institutions, creating their own laws and rules that have nothing to do with the Torah or its principles. YHWH gave us a uniform code and pattern of living, the Torah, and created the Ketubah to protect women from the fruit of Torahlessness or lawlessness. The fruit of Torahlessness is what we are seeing in society today: increased abuse of women and children and crime. The Ketubah protects women from such ignorance and vices that lead to women submitting to such acts of abuse without them knowing it. The Ketubah sets women free in their marriage as they know exactly what their responsibilities are, and the women are honored and protected along with their children. She is honored because the Ketubah holds the men and women accountable for fulfilling their marriage responsibilities and commitments. Marriage is a risk, and it's naive to think that being in love with each other at the alter will bring everlasting bliss; on the contrary, a good marriage takes hard work, and YHWH knows because He created mankind, so He put a provision in place to make the marriage

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a safer place for the family. Both men and women bring into the marriage experience education, gifts, talents, and aspirations; these must be nurtured and grounded on the Torah and not grounded on ignorance and control disguised as submission. THE ROLE. In traditional Judaism, women are, for the most part, seen as separate but equal. Women's obligations and responsibilities are different from men's but no less important. In some aspects, women's responsibilities are considered more important. In the Torah, the primary role of women is that of wife and mother keepers of the household. Judaism has great respect for this role that is bestowed on the woman. This respect is given to the role of the women because the Torah woman ensures that the Torah is taught and lived out in her home. In today's Torahless (lawless) society, women themselves are bringing into the home alcohol, drugs, cigarettes, gossip, slander, and all forms of negative, damaging influences that affect the children, and when this happens, the parents condemn their children's behavior, in which they as parent's role modeled the negative behavior by living it themselves. We live in a time where the family is being destroyed because the family as YHWH has designed; it is Torahless, and where there is no Torah, there is ignorance, which leads to control and man-made rules. The Torah woman guards her household against evil, which means keeping her household clean, ensuring that the world's negative influences do not enter her home. She upholds her husband and does him good all the days of her life; her husband can trust her sound judgment. The Torah woman is a busy woman who keeps her house and family in order; she is also a sound businesswoman. She gives no time to idleness, gossip, slander, and harmful pastimes. She ensures that her time is spent positively and productively. She ensures that she is not ignorant, learning about her environment to ensure she is better equipped to assist her husband in leading their children in today's failing society. The Torah woman ensures that her family is healthy by directing them to activities that bring physical and mental health. The Torah woman's primary role is wife and mother; though she can pursue a role outside of the home, this must be done with wisdom. Women are putting their own careers before their primary responsibility. This is causing a breakdown in the family like never before. Women are compelled to work in some cases just to make extra income in order to survive. Women are forced out of their primary roles through circumstance; when this happens, the family is dysfunctional, the community is dysfunctional, the end of which is a Torahless (lawless) society. Today, everywhere, children are rebelling against their parents and secular and spiritual authorities because women have been forced to become the breadwinners in all countries. The Torah does not mandate a woman to work. The role of woman in the Torah is elevated on Shabbat (Seventh-day) when in every Torah keeping home, the mother and her children are blessed by the head of the family, her husband, on this weekly day. On the Shabbat, the husband reads to his wife Mishle (Proverbs) 31 as a blessing, and many messianic Torah-keeping households anoint the wife and her children. Similarly, the children are blessed with the blessing of Ephraim and Manasseh if they are boys, and the girls are blessed with the blessing of Leah and Rachel. In most cultures today, a woman is only honored on Mother's Day or her birthday - a tradition with no biblical roots, and similarly, children are honored twice a year. When the women of this World and Age assume their divine role as how the Creator intended them to be, there will be no more wars between people and nations, violence in our streets will dissipate, wayward and delinquent children will be a thing of the past, starvation and poverty will end, and fatherless families will be a rare thing. How do I know this? The pattern is observed in Nature with the animals who daily model peace and harmony in the family. Yeshua spoke, 'Look at birds (nature) of the air and learn from them' Mattityahu (Matthew) 6:26. Again, look at any home where the woman is honored and respected, and you will see a Mishle (Proverbs) 31 woman working in the background. I had a blessed mother like that.