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Is the modern woman happier?, 1954.

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IS THE MODERN WOMAN HAPPIER?

May 9, 1954

This weekend, dear Friends, there have been two days of special commemoration. One day commemorated the establishment of a State and the other the establishment of a Home. Yesterday was the sixth anniversary of the establishment of the State of Israel, and today is Mother's Day.

When I announced six years ago at the United Nations the establishment of the State of Israel, one could not foresee at all the truly amazing developments which would follow. The event itself, the establishment of the State of the third commonwealth of Israel after 1878 years of statelessness and national homelessness was itself a tremendous and extraordinary and exciting thing. Such moments are rare in human history. And what followed has been equally remarkable. There followed a war, there followed victory, there ensued what has come to be known as a veritable Epic of upbuilding, of construction, of development, of ingathering, unprecedented in the annals of mankind. Within these six short years the population of that little country has grown to 1,600,000; some 350 new villages and towns have been established; vast areas of land, desolate and waste for centuries and some of which from the beginning of time have been put under cultivation and are becoming centers of human habitation and of civilization; industry; agriculture; science; literature; all of these have been developing at an amazing tempo in that little land. Natural mineral resources are being explored and discovered; oil drilling has begun in quite a number of parts of the country; and what was non-existent six short years ago is today a thriving and thrilling prosperous little country on which are centered the eyes of the world and the hopes of the people.

We can wish the State of Israel all success and all blessings, all goodness on its sixth anniversary. It faces many difficulties, economic and political, but knowing the temper of the people, their enthusiasm, their consecration, their capacity for self-sacrifice, and knowing also the readiness of the Jews of the world to stand by that brave little people in its struggle for self-sufficiency and complete independence, my confidence is unshaken in the future growth and prosperity of the State of Israel.

It is also, my dear Friends, a gracious, symbolic act to set aside one day of the year to pay tribute to our mothers, for this is Mother's Day. Symbols and symbolic acts are very important in the life of men and women. A flag is just a piece of colored bunting, but we salute it reverently as a symbol of our country, as an expression of our patriotism and loyalty. It isn't the flowers which we send to our mothers on this day, or the perfume, or the candy, or the trinkets, or even the message, which is the important thing. The important thing is that these are visible tokens of a love which cannot always be expressed, which remind both the sender and the recipient of those tender unbroken and unbreakable ties, bonds which hold fast even when they are separated - mothers, children - by years and by great distances. It's a re-affirmation of one of the great sanctities of human life.

It is good for a mother to know, and it does her no harm at all to know, and in fact warms the very cockles of her heart to know, in the midst of her busy, routine household duties which frequently absorb and over-tax her, for a mother's day is a very long day, it is good for her to know that her children do rise up and call her blessed, and her husband also, and he calls her blessed.

As a rule we are never, never as lavish in our praise of mothers as they are in their love of us. Mothers love us even when we do not

merit that love. They love us whether we are attractive or ungainly, whether we are unsuccessful or successful, failures or not; when others think little of us they think very much of us.. There is an old proverb, "In the eyes of the mother every beetle is a gazelle. Poets have sung mothers love since the beginning of time and have not exhausted the theme nor ever will.

It is interest, Friends, to know that in the Bible there is no commandment which calls upon mothers to love their children. It wasn't necessary. But there are commandments in the Bible to remind us "Ye shall revere your mother." "Despise not your mother when she is old." There is an old Jewish proverb that a mother may rear seven children and care for them through their infancy and their sickness and their years of dependency with all the vexations and all the irritations. A mother may rear seven children and care for them but seven children may sometimes not find it in them to take care properly of their one mother in her old age and fail to give her that which she needs most - pride in the knowledge of her children's unfailing love and solicitude.

Of course this is true also of father, not merely of mother. I suppose that for business reasons they set aside two days, a Mother's Day and a Father's Day. That's all right, but actually they should go together - Father's Day and Mother's - there should be a Parents' Day. The Bible never separates the two - "Honor thy father and thy mother." In the Book of Ecclesiastes in the Apocrypha the same thought is expressed - "Honor thy father and mother in word and deed that a blessing may come upon you from them.

And I suppose that the loveliest tribute which we can pay our mothers is to fulfill their expectations of us, not to disappoint them in our manhood and womanhood. Mothers never expect rewards; they are not calculating; they do not give in order to receive; there are no ledgers kept

in the love of parents. But the greatest reward which you can make to them is to fulfill as best as we can their high expectations of us.

I do not ask that you repay
The hours of toil and pain.
The sacrifice of youth and strength
Shall not have been in vain.
I do not ask for gratitude
But only this, my child,
That you shall live your life so well
My gifts be not defiled.

I think that perhaps is the profoundest truth which can come to us on Mother's Day.

This may be as good a way of introducing the discussion of our subject this morning as any - "Is Modern Woman Happier?" Is modern woman happier? In a real sense personal happiness has very little to do with the age in which we live - ancient, medieval, or modern - unless of course we live under encompassing conditions of oppression, terror, and want, which reduce our chances of personal happiness to a minimum. Men and women, of course, who live in slavery or in exile or in penury, in want, under tyranny, persecution will find their lives embittered, and their struggle for happiness will be by that much curtailed, curbed.

Such conditions - these to which I have referred - do not, however, belong exclusively to the past. They are to be found in many parts of the world today and they never apply to men and women of any given era or any given epoch in civilization. Not all the men and women of antiquity were happy or unhappy, nor of the medieval times, nor of a century ago, nor yesterday or today for that matter. There are women today who are happy, extremely happy; there are those who are unhappy and extremely unhappy. And the character of society in which they live is, in my judgment, not the decisive element, not the critical factor in their happiness or their unhappiness.

To be sure, modern woman has many advantages which her sister of a generation ago or a century ago did not have. Modern woman has far more

freedom, far more independence than her sisters of generations ago. She enjoys more rights. Modern woman is better educated. They are to be found in increasingly large numbers in institutions of higher learning throughout the land. More doors of opportunity in the professions and industry and in government and public service are opened to the modern woman. She has equal rights with man at the ballot box. She is fully emancipated. By and large modern woman has used these advantages worthily and has made and is making a full contribution in the life of society today. In all walks of life, in social service, in the teaching profession, in industry, in commerce, in the arts and in the sciences, modern woman today is represented far beyond what the woman of two or three generations ago could even have dreamt of. And insofar as these gains do contribute to human happiness, modern woman may be said to be happier. Also, the burdens and the drudgery of the housekeeper in the home have been sharply reduced in our generation. This is a very important fact. The many time-saving and labor-saving devices in cooking and cleaning and laundering - the deepfreeze, the refrigerator, the pre-cooked foods, the canned goods - all practically unknown to their unmechanized grandmothers - these have lightened many of the burdens of the home and to that extent they have contributed to the sense of well-being, the comfort, the happiness of modern woman.

Although it is questionable whether the modern mother with many of these facilities at her disposal in the home really has much more leisure time from her work of cleaning and cooking and looking after her household and her children where there is no domestic help - and the wages of domestics today are three or four times as high as they were a few short years ago, and this has placed domestic help beyond the reach of most American women and most American homes - and while it is true that some 17 million American women are gainfully employed, earn their own living -

this is giving them a sense of economic independence which will be all to the good, it is also to be borne in mind that many of these 17 million women have to work because of the increased cost of living, because of the greater demands of the family budget, because of the desire to maintain a higher standard of living for the family and the children in the home, and that therefore many of these women are performing a double task today and are carrying a double burden: they are wage earners and mothers, who have to look after a home and a family.

Another question is have these increased advantages in independence and in quality and in freedom - freedom from a degree of drudgery - have they increased, actually, the happiness of modern woman? It is very difficult to say. It is very difficult to put all women in one category and judge the situation en masse. Here are some factors which might cause us to recheck our conclusions concerning the contentment, the increased happiness of modern woman: the divorce rate in our country has doubled in 30 years, and a divorce, whatever else it may mean, indicates an unhappy home. The number of American homes that are breaking on the rocks of divorce is a frightening fact to consider. With the increased freedom and independence of the American women, divorces have increased and child delinquency has increased. And while there are many causes for child delinquency, they cannot all, of course, be put at the doorstep of the American woman. They are to be put at the doorstep of the unhappy home, of which the American woman is an essential part. I am inclined to believe that if there were greater happiness in the American home, there would be less divorce and less child delinquency. Evidently there are increased strains and tensions which contribute to the disruption of the stability of the home. And tensions, and stresses, and conflicts are not indices of contentment, well-being, and happiness.

Drunkenness and alcoholism have increased among the modern woman,

and that too is not an indication of increasing happiness. Happy and contented people do not take to drink. Nervous breakdowns and suicides have increased among modern women. Psychiatrists and psychologists are doing a land-office business listening to the unhappy tales of their women patients - many of them of the middle and upper classes.

I sometimes wonder how our mothers and grandmothers got along without the psychiatrist's confessional couch, how we got along without the cocktail hour, which has now become ritual before every dinner party, where men and women drink themselves into a haze before they sit down to dinner. How did they get along without card-playing twice a day, our grandmothers? How did they get along without divorce? And were they really less happy than their children or grandchildren of today? I am not drawing any conclusions. In fact I haven't the courage to draw any conclusions!

Some time ago I read in Reader's Digest an article written by Leland Stowe called "What's Wrong with American Women?" I can only read the topical headlines of the article which will give you an idea of what some people think is wrong with the American women of today. "The realist," he says, "brings these charges against American women: 1. They are the most spoiled and self-centered in the world. 2. Our women are exceptionally aggressive. 3. Our women are the most unhappy and dissatisfied. 4. Our women are less feminine and less interested in men. (This one I couldn't fully understand.) 5. Our women are excessively expensive. 6. Our women are most restless and bored. 7. Our women are less spiritual and have less individuality." A year or two later I read another article in another magazine, "Coronet," called "What is Right with American Women?" This, as you may well imagine, was written by a Frenchman, a chivalrous Frenchman, Bernard Valery. He makes mince-meat of all these arguments of this Mr. Stowe. He says, among other things, "Nevertheless, after eight months in America

where I have come in contact with men and women of all walks of life, I most emphatically disagree with all these arguments (not only of Mr. Stowe but all those who have his point of view). In fact, I have reached the terribly subversive conclusion that the American woman is one of the most complete, responsible, and attractive specimens of her sex found anywhere." That sounds a little better - more encouraging. And he has this further to say: "Not long ago I asked a famous French couturier, Jacques Fath, what he thought about American women. "I think they are superb," he said, "but I would be afraid to marry one because they are so intelligent, strong, efficient, hard working, and almost too attractive. An American wife would give me an inferiority complex." Now I wouldn't for the life of me undertake to take sides on this issue, especially at a Sisterhood service. One is tempted here to follow the advice which was given by Socrates, long ago, "Praise the Athenians when you are among the Athenians." Actually, it would be wiser for me this morning to speak on "What's Wrong with the American Man?" and I could answer it all in one word: Plenty.

But when you come to think of it really, there is no typical American woman who is happy or unhappy, and there is no statistical American woman whom you can call happy or unhappy. Happiness is a very personal matter that wells from within. Environment, circumstances, economic and otherwise, naturally have a role to play in the life of men and women contributing to their happiness and unhappiness when all is said and done. The spring of happiness is in one's own soul, in one's own mind. Good health, a sense of accomplishment, a loving and faithful husband, the pride of children - these make a woman happy, these made women happy a thousand years ago, five thousand years ago in the Stone Age; these still make a woman happy today in the atomic age. They will until the end of time. Physical well-being - unless one has that one has a terrific struggle with one's self, although the difficulties have in many remarkable instances been overcome in a

superb degree without destroying the inner peace of an individual - I have known such cases, but as a rule ill health does undermine one's whole attitude to life, does contribute to saddening, darkening one's horizon. Good health contributes to happiness; a sense of accomplishment, a sense of being needed and of doing something worthwhile, of not frittering one's life away, the sense which an artist has in creating, or a good craftsman or a good artisan or a good home-builder - of doing something real, of contributing something important, of being part of the real life of a community. A sense of accomplishment is a vital element in happiness. Without it your life is shallow, hollow, it's drab in spite of all the tinsel it is surrounded with, in spite of all the excitement and the pleasures which you try to pour into it - your life remains hollow because it lacks a sense of accomplishment, a sense of doing something creatively, whatever it is; and the building of a home, and the running of a home, and the rearing of children; and the creating an atmosphere of wholesomeness and happiness in a home is a tremendous accomplishment which fills the soul of an intelligent woman with deep satisfaction. And a loving faithful husband, and the pride of children - these are the elements, in my humble judgment, which make for happiness in modern times and ancient times - all else is secondary, all else is on the periphery.

And the wise woman, therefore, who looks well to the ways of her household, to use a Biblical phrase, all other things being equal, will find a largest measure of happiness in life whether it is this year, next year, or at any time. It is in these directions which happiness is to be sought. In fact happiness is not to be sought at all when you come to think of it. Happiness comes as an inevitable by-product, as an attendant corollary when you do the things that you want to do and that you feel you ought to do and you do them well. That gives you a sense of well-being, a pride, a dignity, a competence, which is happiness.

Modern women, I've known many of them extremely happy because of these very things. I have known other women who, in spite of all the advantages with which life surrounds them, have somehow missed out because they have followed blind detours away from the king's highway. The king's highway is clear and open and well marked for those who wish to follow it.

So it's rather difficult to answer a question categorically, "Is the modern woman happier?" or unhappier? The modern woman can be happy. Many modern women are happy, extremely happy. If they follow the ancient and the eternal wisdom, namely, first and foremost the woman is the home-builder and the home-conserver, and her dominion and her majesty and her glory are in the home.



1/ This week-end - 2 sp. day - ~~just~~ we has to do with the Estab.
of a State - the other - Estab. of a Home -
Yesterday - 6th Anniv. of Estab. of State / Is.

Today - Mother's Day.

2/ It would not be proper to ignore either day =
When 60 yrs - UN - could not see for see - 1878 yrs without
a State, then we see future - War - Victory - Eire.
Free Democracy - West -
Overcome - 1.600.000. / 700,000 for 72 countries since May 48
double - Housing - Is there - Employment - Health

327 new villages - agriculture

Industry - providing common goods - Export - from 1000 to 3400

Natural Mineral Resources

Copper - various ceramic clays

Oil drilling has begun

Culture & Education

(a) Arab question - seen by world - blockade - threat -
- no peace.



3/ Prayers, symbols act to set aside ^{every} day to pay tribute (2)
to an mother.

Symbols + symbols acts are important.
A play is a piece, a word, a thing - but we salute it, as
symbol of an country - and an expression of our fatherhood
It is not the flower which we send to our mother - ^{as we do this,}
lay, or the candy ^{performs} in the light or the message - ^{in the}
are visible tokens of our love - which cannot always be
expressed - which kind sends and recipient will
of tender and unbroken links and unbreakable bonds -
- which hold fast - even the separated by years and or
great distances -

4/ It is good for a mother to know, that and it does not
no harm at all - in fact warms the very heart;
to be told, in the voice of her very own children, humble
deeds - which freely always over for her + that
"her children rise up and call her blessed" - and her husband,
too, and all her blessed"

① We are never as bright in our praise of our mother
as they are of their love for us: - and the mother is even when
when, in the eyes of men, we are passions - unconscious - with thought - then love
acts of have strong mother love gives the beginning "In the
time and have not exhausted the source - two eyes will mother
② No can man to mother to love their children - that mother is
"Ye shall reverence your mother" (Ex. 1)
"Deaf as a dumb mother when he is old" (Prov. 1)

a epoch in civilization.

All the men known, the antiquity was happy a
unhappy - no, the modern times - no a century ago -
no yesterday - no to-day -

There are women to-day who are happy and there
are those who are unhappy - and the character, the society
in which they live is, in my judgment, not the
decisive element in their happiness or unhappiness.

8/ To be more - more advantages - her sisters / last century
fully protected by laws of married husband
where refers - little

Has more freedom & independence -
educated - more doors, opportunity in the professions and industry,
in government & public service are opened to her - she has equal
rights with man at the ballot box - she is fully emancipated
used them worthily - Social Service - Teachers

(a) In so far as these factors contribute to human happiness -
Modern woman may be said to be happier.

(b) The drudgery ^{and} work ^{has been reduced} - the many time saving &
labor-saving devices which have been introduced in the modern
home - the iron cooking - laundry - laundry - vacuum - to their
unmechanized grandmothers - have lightened many burdens
- and to that extent may have contributed to happiness, ~~the~~

(c) Altho it is questionable whether the modern mother, with many
of her duties, has at her disposal, really ^{as yet} has been freed
from her work of cooking laundry after her husband and her
children - when there is no work - and the wife, domestic

to-day ^{where} as 3 times as high as they were a few short years ago —
~~matter~~ it just demonstrates help beyond the reach, most American
home keepers

(d) And while 17% American women earn their own living — ^{— possibly enough}
and are econ. independent — it is to be born in mind — that
many of them have to work — bes., the increased cost of
living & the greater demand, the family budget — and
that ∴ many of them carry performs a double task &
carry a double burden — They are wage-earners and
mothers ~~in the~~ who have to look after a home and
husband and child a family.

9) Have ~~the~~ increased advantages in inst. - quality - quantity -
increased the happiness of modern women?

Difficult to say ~~but~~ more difficult to judge a part than
all in one category & judge them in mass

Here are factors which must be considered —

- The divorce rate has doubled in 30 yrs — has a direct
means an unhappy home —

- Child Delinquency has increased — and while there are many
causes — the unhappy home — is certainly one, then

- Drunkness & alcoholism among women has increased
- no indication here of increasing happiness, happy &
contented people do not talk to drink —

- Women break-downs + suicides have increased
among modern women.

- Psychoanalyst + psychologists - are doing a bad job because
listening to the unhappy tales of their women patients -
- many of them | mid-20s suffer from -

10). How did our mothers grandmothers get along without the
psychoanalyst (~~was~~ confessional couch) - without the ~~week~~ -
tail ~~parties~~ which have now become ritual before
every dinner party - where men turner drink themselves
into a haze before they sit down to dinner -

How did they get along without card playing five a day -
- and without divorce?

And were they less happy than their daughters or
grand-daughters?

11). Some time ago (I read in Reader's Digest - What's Wrong
with American Women? - written by Leland Stowe. (Irish)

Some time later "Coronet" What is Right with American
Women? - written by Bernard Valery - and as you may
imagine - a Frenchman -

He makes mini-mat of all the Stowe arguments -
(Irish) and concludes (Irish)

12). I wouldn't for the life, understand to talk notes
as this issue - esp! at a last hard severe

One is tempted to follow Socrates advice "to praise the Athenians when you are among the Athenians"

Actually safer What's Wrong with American men? -
and I could answer it in one word - "Plenty"

13/ But, in reality, there is no typical Am. woman -
- & no statistical Am. woman who can be said to be Happy
or unhappy.

Happiness wells from within -
Good health - a sense of accomplishment - a loving
and faithful husband - the pride / children - these make
to American happy - to-day - as they did 100 + years
ago - still the same - the same age - the same age -
as they held to the end / time -

- all else is secondary - peripheral -

14/ And the wise woman who looks well to the needs her
household - well, all things being equal, provides the best
means, happiness in life -

I do not ask that you repay
The hours of toil and pain.
The sacrifice of youth and strength
Shall not have been in vain.
I do not ask for gratitude
But only this, my child,
That you shall live your life so well
My gifts be not defiled.

