**WOMEN OF [CHAYIL]**

This word takes on several meanings in Jewish texts. Chayil can connote bravery (Ps. 76:6); capability (Prov. 12:4); triumph (Ps. 118:15); a rampart (Ps. 84:8); or wealth (Prov. 13:22).

**girds herself with strength**

Genesis 2:22
With understanding the Lord God took the rib from Adam for a woman and he brought her to Adam.
Babylonian Talmud, Niddah 45b
“And the Lord God endowed the rib with understanding” (Gen. 2:22). The verse indicates that the Holy One endowed woman with more understanding than man.

What a rare find is a woman of [chayil]! Her worth is far beyond that of rubies… She sets her mind on an estate and acquires it; she plants a vineyard by her own labors. She girds herself with strength, and performs her tasks with vigor. She sees that her business thrives; her lamp never goes out at night… She gives generously to the poor; her hands are stretched out to the needy… Her husband is prominent in the gates, as he sits among the elders of the land… She is clothed with strength and splendor; she looks to the future cheerfully.

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Bobbie Rosenfeld, Athlete (1904-1969)
No longer are we athletes the pretty maids of yesteryear. Our perfect 36’s are being ruined; our features are becoming quite ‘Frankensteinish,’ shout these croquet and pat-ball advocates, all because we are no longer satisfied with being just a ‘rib of Adam’, but we have elected to hurl the discus, throw the javelin, run and jump as ‘Adam’ does…

Bella Abzug, Feminist Politician (1920-1998)
I believe very deeply that the hope of an effective women’s political movement lies in reaching out … to working women, to young women, to black women, to women on welfare—and joining their strength together with millions of other American women who are on the move all over this country demanding an end to discrimination and fighting for their rights as full and equal citizens.

**Her mouth is full of wisdom**

Babylonian Talmud, Berachot 11a
There were thugs in the neighborhood of Rebbe Meir, and they aggravated him greatly. So Rebbe Meir prayed that they would die. Beruriah his wife said to him, What do you think this verse means: It is written, “The sins will be removed from the earth” (Psalms 104:35)? Is it written that the sinners should be removed?

Gertrude Weil, Social Reformer (1879-1971)
Knowing our past we shall find strength and wisdom to meet the present.

**let her works praise her in the gates**

Babylonian Talmud, Berachot 45b
Every woman has a mind of her own.

Gertrude Elion, Chemist (1918-1999)
What greater joy can you have than to know what an impact your work has had on people’s lives?