

HALACHIC AND HASHKAFIC ISSUES IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

8 - WOMEN AND TORAH

PART 3 - WOMEN RABBIS OU ISRAEL CENTER - SPRING 2016

A] SOME HASHKAFIC CONSIDERATIONS

- **Should** there be women rabbis - where is the pressure coming from?
- Is there an overriding non-halachic imperative to avoid new innovations - connections with Reform? feminism?
- Does it go against our 'mesorah'? How do we define that? Does the 'mesorah' ever change?
- Slippery slope arguments - feeding other egalitarian agendas?
- Lack of opportunity for women to develop careers in Torah - wasted intellectual and spiritual talent?
- Women's frustration having engaged in higher level learning and the wish to take that 'to the next level'.
- Lack of proper training for those women who do have communal leadership or teaching roles.
- Feelings of disenfranchisement in Jewish religious life.
- Discomfort, disorientation and embarrassment in dealing with existing structures of interface with Jewish law - personal she'elot.

B] SOME HALACHIC CONSIDERATIONS

Is a woman halachically allowed to carry out the different elements of a Rabbinic job (see also Part 2):- (i) receiving a semicha; (ii) ruling in halacha; (iii) leading prayer services; (iv) conducting weddings, funerals etc; (v) reading from the Torah; (vi) giving sermons in shul; (vii) pastoral work; (viii) counseling; (ix) education~teaching Torah; (x) providing guidance in theology; (xi) public communal leadership; (xii) sitting on a Beit Din

C] WOMEN AS JUDGES

We saw in Part 2 last week that, according to the mainstream psak (including the Rambam and the Shulchan Aruch) women are prohibited in halacha from being Dayanot. We also saw that there is a minority position that this is permitted.

D] WOMEN AND SEMICHA

We saw in Part 2 last week that, according to some poskim, the modern Semicha is effectively a continuation of original Semicha of the Sanhedrin, which was limited to men.

E] WOMEN IN COMMUNAL LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

1. שום תָּשִׂים עֲלֶיךָ מֶלֶךְ אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ בּוֹ מִקְּרֵב אֲחֵיךָ

דברים י:טו

The Torah includes a mitzva to appoint a king over the Jewish people

2. מלך, ולא מלכה

ספרי דברים פרשת שופטים פסקא קנו

Chazal in the Sifrei (Israel 3C) understand that the reference to a 'melech-king' excludes the possibility of a queen

3. תנינא. (דברים יז) שום תשים עליך מלך... מקרב אחיך - כל משימות שאתה משים לא יהיה אלא מקרב אחיך

קידושין עו:

Chazal see this mitzva to appoint a king as a prototype for all communal public appointments

4. ד"א שום תשים עליך מלך - ולא מלכה. מלמד שאין מעמידין אשה במלכות וכן כל משימות שבישראל אין ממנין בהן אלא איש

מדרש תנאים לדברים פרק יז

Chazal in the Medrash Tanaim (a lesser known halachic medrash on the book of Devarim) apply the prohibition to appointing women to all positions of communal authority

5. אין מעמידין אשה במלכות שנאמר עליך מלך ולא מלכה, וכן כל משימות שבישראל אין ממנים בהם אלא איש

רמב"ם הלכות מלכים פרק א הלכה ה

As such, when the Rambam rules this halacha in the Yad Chazaka (Egypt 12C) he extends the issur to appointing any women to 'mesima shebeyisrael' - Jewish public office. In the context of this prohibition, this could be an issur Torah. It should be noted that he ALSO extends the prohibitions of public appointments to other groups disqualified from kingship eg converts. So it is not necessarily to do with 'women' per se. He understands, like the gemara in Kiddushin, that the mitzva to appoint a melech is dealing with all public appointments and the same qualifications and disqualifications will apply across the board

6. וא"ת הא כתיב ודבורה אשה נביאה היא שופטה את ישראל, לא קשיא שהיתה מלמדת להם המשפטים. א"נ ע"פ הדבור היה

רדב"ז הלכות מלכים פרק א הלכה ה

The Radvaz (Egypt 16C) asks on this Rambam from the example of Devora, who judged Israel at the time of the Shoftim. He gives two answers; (i) Devorah was a teacher of halacha and Torah not a leader (another proof for the discussion in Part 2) and (ii) Devorah was a leader but was exceptionally sanctioned by God through Nevuah (these answers are also found in Tosafot on Niddah 50a)

7. ומה שאמר הכתוב על דבורה (שופטים ד) והיא שפטה את ישראל, וכתיב נמיועלו אליה בני ישראל למשפט, זה שהיו מתנהגים על פיה לא בתורת מינוי, דהא אמרין בספרי שום תשים עליך מלך ולא מלכה והוא הדין לשאר משימות, אלא שמתנהגים על פי עצתה, או שקבלוה עליהם לדין שהמקבל עליו לדין ולעדות קרוב או פסול דינו דין ועדותו עדות

חידושי הריטב"א מסכת שבועות דף ל עמוד א

The Ritva (Spain 14C) agrees with the Rambam's position on the prohibition of appointing women to positions of authority. He also raises the question of Devorah but gives two different answers (i) Devorah was not formally appointed but the people went to her for advice; (ii) Devorah was not really halachically acceptable for the role she performed but the people accepted her as a judge in spite of that. In a case where a person accepts an otherwise invalid witness or judge (eg a relative) the appointment and judgement are valid. It is interesting to consider what effect this latter rationale would have on a modern community's decision to accept a female leader

8. סוף דבר אף שיש הרבה ראשונים הסוברים כהרמב"ם אבל רש"י ותוס' והרא"ש והר"ן ורמב"ן פליגי ומסתבר שכן סובר גם הרשב"א ובודאי למעשה יש להחמיר כשיטת הרמב"ם ודעימיה כיון דפלוגתא דרבוותא הוא. ובודאי הוא רק באופן שליכא איסור יחוד וכדומה והשגחה שנשאלתי הרי עיקר העסק הוא עם נשים ולא שייך כלל נידון ענין יחוד. ולכן לצורך גדול בשביל חיות האלמנה ובניה היה שייך לסמוך על החולקים על הרמב"ם כבכל פלוגתא דרבוותא אבל מצאתי עצה לקיים גם שיטת הרמב"ם וממילא מוכרחין לעשות כהעצה שהרי ממילא ליכא צורך לסמוך על החולקים.

שו"ת אגרות משה יורה דעה חלק ב סימן מה

Rav Moshe Feinstein has two teshuvot concerning appointing a woman to run a kashrut hashgacha. In the course of those teshuvot, he deals in detail with the issue of appointing a woman to leadership roles. He finds that, although many Rishonim do agree with the Rambam that it is prohibited, many others do NOT agree. Rav Moshe rules that we should normally rule in such cases like the Rambam but in special circumstances (like the ones in this teshuva) he is prepared to be lenient and rule against the Rambam. This of course does not in any sense imply that Rav Moshe would be lenient in debate on women rabbis. It does however show that the halachic position is subject to dispute.

9.

מלבד הצדדים השונים להיתר שהזכרנו בהנהגת גרים. יש להוסיף שהאיסור במינוי נשים לתפקידים שונים קל יותר, משום שעצם האיסור שנוי במחלוקת.

מכל האמור נראה שאשה וגר יכולים לשמש כמנהיגים ואפי' כגדולי הדור שכה הנהגתם מחייבת את הסמכות. אשה וגר יכולים לשמש מורי הוראה וללמד תורה ופסקים. תפקידים שהסמכות בהם נקבעת לפי כישורי המועמדים והסמכות יונקת מהכישורים יכולים לשמש בהם אשה וגר. יכולים הם לדון מבלי כפייה. יש ספק אם יכולים הם לקבל סמכויות ע"י בחירות דמוקרטיות שדינם כמי שהקהל קיבלו עליהם. ולדעת הרבה מן הפוסקים הדבר מותר. ולכן באשה יש להקל בדבר שעצם האיסור יש בו מחלוקת ראשונים, בכל תפקיד יש לחלק ברורות, אם יש בו מכה הסמכות או מכה ההנהגה.

רב אליהו בקשי-זורון, תורה שבעל-פה תשל"ט (כרך כ) עמ' עב

10. Thus we have shown that the Rav believed that women serving as communal rabbis was forbidden both because it is a *minui kahal* and because it is position of *serara*. Logic dictates that he would have also opposed rabbinic ordination, whose primary and declared purpose is to certify the suitability of candidates for such a position. This in no way contravenes the fact that a large cadre of leading poskim have disagreed to varying extents with the Rav's sole reliance on the Rambam, his analysis of *serara*, and his distinction between *serara* and *minui kahal*. Furthermore, many poskim accept the efficacy of democratic elections (*kiblu alayhu*) as a means of circumventing *serara* considerations in other communal leadership positions (such as shul presidency and elected political positions), and they may well feel the same about Rabbinic positions. Others have invoked a variety of additional factors (inter alia custom, modesty and communal cohesiveness) in the latter case. As a result of all these considerations, it will not be a simple matter to come to a final ruling on the issue of women's ordination. But despite this controversy between *gedolei ha-poskim*, as *talmidim* of *Moreinu veRabbeinu haRav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik zt"l*, we owe this *gadol ha-dor* the honor and consideration of involving him in our deliberations.

The View of Rav Joseph B. Soloveitchik zt"l on the Ordination of Women: Rabbi Aryeh Frimer, Text and Texture, June 26 2010

Rav Soloveitchik was never explicit on the issue of women Rabbis although at least some of his Talmidim are clear that he would he fully opposed this, based on his position on serara

- In October 1931, Rabbi Yehiel Ya'akov Weinberg, one of the great rabbinic authorities of the 20th century, agreed that there was no halachic bar to women being elected to the heads of communities, but since there was a consensus that it was not modest or appropriate, he felt that there should be no change in public policy. In a later responsa in 1960, he suggested that the matter must be left to work itself out. His response followed a private letter in which he pointed out that while the scholars of the ultra-Orthodox world opposed women's suffrage, in Israeli elections even ultra-Orthodox women vote (see also below).
- Another factor in the issue of 'serara' is the extent to which this concept applies to democratically elected or selected employees who work under a limited employment contract, do not inherit their office, and are subject to dismissal.
- Note that since 2013 the United Synagogue in the UK have elected women as presidents of synagogue communities, following a ruling of the London Beit Din in 2012 that this was not in breach of halacha

F] TZNIUT

11. אֶכֶן אַתָּה אֵל מְסֻתָּתָר אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מוֹשִׁיעַ

ישעיהו מה:טו

One of the middot of God is to remain hidden. Since we have a mitzva of 'vehalachta bedrachav' - to copy the Divine middot, this makes 'histatrut' - remaining private an overriding midda within Judaism

12. ... שמעיה אומר אהוב את המלאכה ושנא את הרבנות (ר"ע מזרעטורא: התרחק מלנהוג שררה על לזר, שהרצנות מקצרת את זעליה)

משנה מסכת אבות פרק א"י

As such, we are encouraged to avoid leadership positions (Yosef's early death is seen by Chazal as a result of his leadership)

13. כָּל כְּבוֹדָה בֵּת מְלֶכֶךְ פְּנִימָה מִמְשַׁבְּצוֹת זָהָב לְבוֹשָׁה

תהלים פרק מה פסוק יז

This may be especially true of women who traditionally have been encouraged to maintain a more private role

14. The halakhah "a king, but not a queen" appears to be a reflection of the religio-social ideal 'Kol kevudah bat melekh penimah - The entire glory of the king's daughter is within' (Psalms 45: 14). Various explanations have been offered in attempts to formulate the philosophical basis of this ideal. Such explanations are based upon an analysis of the concept of tzni'ut in all its ramifications. Suffice it to say that, the ideal of "kol kevudah" notwithstanding, women were never barred from seeking gainful employment or from engaging in commerce. Indeed, there are virtually no halakhic restrictions placed upon a woman seeking a career outside the home. Nevertheless, the kol kevudah concept does find expression in Halakhah. This expression is perhaps more a matter of form than of substance, but is significant nonetheless. It would appear that the restriction 'a king, but not a queen' is designed to give formal recognition to kol kevudah as an ideal, if not a norm. It is precisely in the public arena, in the holding of public office and thereby commanding constant public attention, that the Torah saw the greatest possible violation of feminine tzni'ut. Of course, this restriction in no way guarantees the approximation, much less the realization, of this ideal, but it does serve to emphasize the principle as a halakhic desideratum and as such the form is as significant as the substance.

Women on Synagogue Boards: Rabbi J David Bleich, Tradition 15:4, 1976

15. ואיזו היא 'דת יהודית', הוא מנהג הצניעות שנהגו בנות ישראל

רמב"ם הלכות אישות פרק כד

16. דת יהודית - שנהגו בנות ישראל ואע"ג דלא כתיבא

רש"י מסכת כתובות דף עב עמוד א

The halachic parameters of hilchot tzniut are defined by 'dat yehudit' - the religious practices of the Jewish people. In the context of women's practice of tzniut, Rashi defines 'dat yehudit' as 'the minhag of Jewish women in areas that have no written source'. Thus, many aspects of dat yehudit are based in hilchot minhag and will by definition be subjective

17. אם נשים יכולות לבחור ולהיבחר: ב"ה ג' דחנוכה תשי"א מונטרה ידידי היקר הרב הג' חו"ב סוע"ה וכו' מהר"י אפפעל נ"י.

ע"ד שאלתו בבחירת נשים. הג"ר ד"צ הופמן ז"ל התיר את בחירה האקטיבית ואסר את הבחירה הפאסיבית. אולם רבני א"י וכן בעל ח"ח ז"ל והגר"ע ז"ל ועוד, אסרו גם הבחירה האקטיבית. והרב הראשי עוזיאל בספרו משפטי עוזיאל מתיר את הבחירה לבחור ולהיבחר גם יחד. להאוסרים יש טעם מוסרי שזהו נגד הצניעות שאשה תעסוק בענייני ציבור וקהל, גם מביאים ראיה מספרי שופטים (קנז) 'מלך ולא מלכה'. וכן מברכות (מה), נשים ועבדים וקטנים אין מזמנין עליהם, שאין חברתם נאה. וכן במגילה (כג), אשה לא תקרא בתורה מפני כבוד צבור, עי"ש. ויש לדחות ולפלפל, אבל אין תועלת בפלפול כי יש בזה טעמים יותר עמוקים

ש"ת שרידי אש חלק א סימן קלח עמוד תמט

This teshuva of the Seridei Eish (written 1951) deals with the issue of women's right to vote and records the opinion of many early 20C opinions that it was prohibited. These opinions include the Chafetz Chaim, R. Chaim Ozer Grodzinsky and other authorities (R. Yehoshua Leib Diskin, R. Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld, R. Yechiel Michel Tukachinski)

18.

והנה בדבר הדין אין לי מה להוסיף על דברי הרבנים שקדמוני. בתורה בנביאים ובכתובים, בהלכה ובאגדה, הננו שומעים קול אחד, שחובת עבודת הצבור הקבועה מוטלת היא על הגברים ש"האיש דרכו לכבש ואין האשה דרכה לכבש"ג, ושתפקידיה של משרה, של משפט ושל עדות, אינם שייכים לה, וכל כבודה היא פנימה. וההשתדלות למנוע את תערובות המינים בקבוצים היא כחוט חורז במהלך התורה בכללה. וממילא ודאי שנגד הדין היא כל התחדשות של הנהגה צבורית המביאה בהכרח לידי התערבות של המינים בהמון, בקבוצה ובמסבה אחת, במהלך החיים התדיריים של הכלל.

מכתב על בחירת נשים - ר א' קוק תשרי תרפ"ט (1919)

Rav Kook was also totally against women voting on various grounds, including tzniut

Following the radical shift in the structure of society over the last 90 years since WWI, orthodox women now vote without any hesitation and with full Rabbinic approval. What changed? Evidently, women voting IS now tzuah. Thus any issur based on hilchot tzniut is always a potentially moving target.

G] MESORAH

19. For example, R Yosef Dov Soloveitchik compellingly demonstrated in his shiurim how Hanhagos Beis Ha-K'nesses, customs of the synagogue, reflect deep halachic and hashkafic considerations, and that the details of the structure of the beis ha-k'nesses are likewise based in halachic categories. These halachic and hashkafic bases and categories are rarely spelled out in the works of poskim, yet they exist as "Mesorah" - that we structure a shul as it has traditionally been done, and that the practices and nuances of tefillah need to be retained even if we cannot find many of them codified in a Halacha sefer, perceiving that there is an authoritative reason for it all, even if we do not know it. The Rav demonstrated that all classical minhagim are in truth reflective of ancient and authoritative halachic and hashkafic considerations, and he was adamant that minhagim be kept and that one adhere to the minhagim of one's father (with a few rare exceptions, in which there is a dispute among minhagim, and one of the minhagim in dispute presents halachic objections). R Hershel Schachter has elaborately presented this in his three-part sefarim series about the Rav.

The entirety of traditional Jewish religious life, including its age-old ritual norms and societal norms, even if they lack formal codification, reflects Torah values, be they halachic or hashkafic; every aspect of our multi-millenia traditional religious communal modality is embedded in or predicated upon halachic or hashkafic axioms. These axioms may not be apparent to the uninitiated, yet failure to perceive them does not grant license to negate, dismiss or reform.

The fact that we are not aware of a strict halachic basis for a millennia-old Torah practice does not allow us to contest the practice and discard it. Our adherence to such practices is based upon Mesorah, and Mesorah is based upon halachic or hashkafic reasoning that often has not been popularized or formulated for mass consumption, thereby making it elusive save for those talmidei chachamim who have the requisite knowledge and insight.

So, in reply to The Jewish Week opinion piece penned by the JOFA leaders: Yes, "this reliance on the arguments of tradition" is indeed a more than legitimate basis for the position of the halachic authorities of the RCA and poskim worldwide to object to the ordination of women. Mesorah has been the bedrock of Jewish religious ritual and societal norms for millennia, and our occasional failure to appreciate it as a manifestation of Torah values does not permit us to dismiss its controlling role and its dispositive, defining function in all aspects of Torah life.

Ordaining Women and the Role of Mesorah: Rabbi Avraham Gordimer, Cross-Currents, June 3 2013¹

1. <http://gt.cross-currents.com/archives/2013/06/03/what-about-mesorah-do-you-not-understand/>

- According this approach can any Jewish practice change, and if so how?
- How are we to account for the many different minhagim and hanhagot of the Jewish world in the 21C which would have seemed quite foreign to Jews of previous centuries - eg. Jewish music, the Beis Yaakov school system, women's voting
- How did new practices ever develop within Judaism eg Chassidut?
- How does Mesorah deal with entirely new and unprecedented realities in the Jewish people?
- Surely there needs to be some distinction made between different types of tradition, based on different bases of halachic and hashkafic authority. Where would Women Rabbis fit into this?

H] META-HALACHIC & HASHKAFIC ISSUES

(i) The importance of Meta-halachic concepts and 'Jewish Values', despite the frequent lack of clarity on how define these precisely.

20. The discussion regarding women's tefilla groups has regrettably focused excessively on technical issues and legalities. It has been framed by limited halakhic queries such as: may the participants forgo tefilla be-tsiibur to attend these groups? May menstruant women touch sifrei Torah? Undoubtedly such technical perspectives and narrow questions are necessary to ensure our compliance with all minutiae of halakha. Torah, however, consists not only of halakhic details, but also of halakhic values. Unfortunately the latter have been neglected in the discussion concerning women's tefilla groups. When halakha is fragmented and truncated in such a fashion, it can be neither interpreted nor implemented correctly. The approach of Rav Soloveitchik zt"l differed. The Rav's consistent opposition to women's tefilla groups was dictated by halakhic values, not halakhic details.

"Halakhic Values and Halakhic Decisions: Rav Soloveitchik's Pesak Regarding Women's Prayer Groups" Rav Meyer Twersky Tradition, 32:3 Spring 1998²

21. In sum, halakha is a two-tiered system consisting of concrete, particularized commandments governing our actions as well as abstract, general imperatives governing the matrix of our actions. Some abstract imperatives focus exclusively on the elan of a specific *mitsva*, e.g., the commandment *Shabbaton* ensures the spiritual character of *Shabbat*. Others are all-encompassing, establishing universal values and standards of conduct; e.g. *kedoshim te-hiyu*. The Torah legislates not only actions, but also *de'ot* (ethical-moral-religious-intellectual dispositions). It prescribes ritual but also establishes boundaries for the concomitant religious experience.

ibid

22. [S]urely we are sociologically and philosophically sophisticate enough to realize - given the wealth of studies on this very point - that it is this modern consciousness that is radically subversive of tradition of all kinds. At the very heart of Judaism, biblical and rabbinic, is an insistence on standing apart from, sometimes maintaining an oppositional stance to, the secular ethos of the age. The very concept - itself biblical - of a "fence around the law" recognizes that there may be behaviors which, while not directly in conflict with Jewish law or values, are nonetheless subversive of them. It was remarkable, therefore, to find a series of "responsa" [by Conservative Rabbi Joel Roth] rejecting a set of halakhic assumptions in favor of an uncritical acceptance of a late-twentieth-century American view of what is "sexist" or undemocratic. This fails to pass a minimal threshold of sociological insight, let alone halakhic integrity.

.....

Halakhah is often taken to be a set of rules, and as such is governed by the general jurisprudential considerations that apply to rules. This view governs, for example, the entire presentation of Roth's book, *The Halakhic Process: A Systemic Analysis*. But this is not so, as Maimonides makes clear in the *Guide*. The laws of Torah, he argues, are intended to do more than govern behavior. They are meant to shape character and cognition. That is why one cannot be halakhically indifferent to secular culture insofar as it shapes character and cognition in ways antithetical to or subversive of Torah...

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, as present at the first Orthodox Forum in 1989 published in *Rabbinic Authority and Personal Autonomy*, 1992 (ed Moshe Sokol) pp 165-167

2. http://www.torahweb.org/torah/special/2003/rwe_wtg.html#fn10

(ii) Women rabbis would never be able to fill all the roles of communal rabbi (eg she could not count towards a minyan). Would their ordination therefore lead to a frustration amongst women rabbis which, itself, would impose pressure to pursue entirely non-halachic choices? Could this lead to otherwise less able men being appointed to rabbinic positions?

(iii) Women Rabbis would be entirely rejected by a large proportion of the Orthodox world. Would this not therefore introduce a new element of friction and machloket into the community? At what point does the perceived cost of an innovation outweigh the perceived gain?

(iv) Are there other fulfilling roles that women can be encouraged to pursue in Jewish learning and teaching? What about education? Toenot Beit Din? Yoetzot? Poskot? Should these be encouraged or discouraged? Should there be a titles other than 'Rabbi' or is that semantic?

(v) The prohibition on innovating in a way which would strengthen the position of sectarian Jewish groups

23. אין שוחטין לגומא כל עיקר, אבל עושה גומא בתוך ביתו בשביל שיכנס הדם לתוכה; ובשוק לא יעשה כן, שלא יחקה את הצדוקים [המינים]: (רש"י - יחזיק ידיכם צמקותיכם, יחקה לשון חוק)

חולין מא.

The Mishna prohibits shechita in a way which would give support to sectarian practices of 'non-orthodox' groups, even though the innovation is itself halachically permissible. There have always been such group - Samaritans, Sadduces, Early Christians. Today, this would apply to adopting practices which would strengthen the position of non-orthodox groups - Conservative, Reform. Note also Chazal's insistence on making tamei the Kohen performing the burning of the ashes of the Red Heifer, despite the otherwise total focus on tahara, just to avoid any suggestion of agreement with sectarian groups.

This has been applied over the last 200 years in various questions, eg prohibiting organs in synagogues, prohibiting flowers at funerals, prohibiting changes to synagogue design. But some innovations have been gradually accepted in many quarters, eg bat mitzva, derashot in the venacular.

(vi) Is the pressure for women Rabbis coming from a secular feminist egalitarian agenda? To what extent are desires for innovation required to be leshem shamayim?

(vii) What are the dangers of refusing to move in an area where there may be some Rabbinic discretion? What will be the response of those pushing hard for change, with or without Rabbinic approval?

(viii) To what extend are the arguments for a wider women's rabbinic role undermined, or even delegitimized, by the radical (and in many cases clearly non-Orthodox) views or associations of some of the main proponents of a progressive agenda

24. There are certain things that are acceptable only in the long run. I approve of the idea of increasing the role of women in religious life and think it is an important one At the same time, things have to be done gradually. To have a woman learn Gemara a generation or two ago like women learn Gemara today would have been too revolutionary. But with time, things change; time answers a lot of questions, erodes discomfort, and helps. So my answer, when I was asked by a reporter about what I think about women rabbis, was, basically: 'It's going too fast'. I did not say it was wrong, I did not say it was right. It just has not paced itself properly. I was criticized, of course. People asked, 'You mean that *al pi din* they're allowed to become rabbis?' My response: 'I don't know - are you sure they're not allowed to?'

Interview with Rabbi Dr. Norman Lamm, YU Commentator, Feb 12 2010

I] FURTHER READING

- *Ordaining Women and the Role of Mesorah*: Rabbi Avraham Gordimer, Cross-Currents, June 3 2013³

3. <http://gt.cross-currents.com/archives/2013/06/03/what-about-mesorah-do-you-not-understand/>

- *Ordination of Insubordination*: Rabbi Avraham Gordimer, Cross-Currents, June 15 2015⁴
- *Women Rabbis*: Rabbi Herschel Schachter, Hakira Vol 11, 2011, p19⁵
- *Can Women Be Rabbis?*: Rabbi Herschel Shechter, TorahWeb.org, 2004⁶
- *Orthodox Women Rabbis?* Rabbi Michael J. Brody and Rabbi Shlomo M. Brody, Hakira Vol 11, 2011, p25⁷
- *Women on Synagogue Boards*: Rabbi J David Bleich, Tradition 15:4, 1976
- *The View of Rav Joseph B. Soloveitchik zt'l on the Ordination of Women*: Rabbi Aryeh Frimer, Text and Texture, June 26 2010⁸
- *On Women in Rabbinic Positions of Leadership*: Rabbi Daniel Sperber, Meorot 8, 2010⁹
- *Isha KeRav Kehillah*: Rabbi Shlomo Aviner

APPENDIX: RABBINICAL COUNCIL OF AMERICA 2015 POLICY CONCERNING WOMEN RABBIS¹⁰

2015 Resolution: RCA Policy Concerning Women Rabbis

Oct 31, 2015 -- Formally adopted by a direct vote of the RCA membership, the full text of "RCA Policy Concerning Women Rabbis" states:

• Whereas, after much deliberation and discussion among its membership and after consultation with poskim, the Rabbinical Council of America unanimously passed the following convention resolution at its April 2010 convention:

1. The flowering of Torah study and teaching by God-fearing Orthodox women in recent decades stands as a significant achievement. The Rabbinical Council of America is gratified that our members have played a prominent role in facilitating these accomplishments.
2. We members of the Rabbinical Council of America see as our sacred and joyful duty the practice and transmission of Judaism in all of its extraordinary, multifaceted depth and richness - halakhah (Jewish law), hashkafah (Jewish thought), tradition and historical memory.
3. In light of the opportunity created by advanced women's learning, the Rabbinical Council of America encourages a diversity of halakhically and communally appropriate professional opportunities for learned, committed women, in the service of our collective mission to preserve and transmit our heritage. Due to our aforesaid commitment to sacred continuity, however, we cannot accept either the ordination of women or the recognition of women as members of the Orthodox rabbinate, regardless of the title.
4. Young Orthodox women are now being reared, educated, and inspired by mothers, teachers and mentors who are themselves beneficiaries of advanced women's Torah education. As members of the new generation rise to positions of influence and stature, we pray that they will contribute to an ever-broadening and ever-deepening wellspring of talmud Torah (Torah study), yir'at Shamayim (fear of Heaven), and dikduk b' mitzvot (scrupulous observance of commandments).

• And whereas on May 7, 2013, the RCA announced:

In light of the recent announcement that Yeshivat Maharat will celebrate the "ordination as clergy" of its first three graduates, and in response to the institution's claim that it "is changing the communal landscape by actualizing the potential of Orthodox women as rabbinic leaders," the Rabbinical Council of America reasserts its position as articulated in its resolution of April 27, 2010... The RCA views this event as a violation of our mesorah (tradition) and regrets that the leadership of the school has chosen a path that contradicts the norms of our community.

Therefore, the Rabbinical Council of America

- Resolves to educate and inform our community that RCA members with positions in Orthodox institutions may not
 1. Ordain women into the Orthodox rabbinate, regardless of the title used; or
 2. Hire or ratify the hiring of a woman into a rabbinic position at an Orthodox institution; or
 3. Allow a title implying rabbinic ordination to be used by a teacher of Limudei Kodesh in an Orthodox institution; and
- Commits to an educational effort to publicize its policy by:
 1. Republishing its policies on this matter; and,
 2. Clearly communicating and disseminating these policies to its members and the community.

This resolution does not concern or address non-rabbinic positions such as Yoatzot Halacha, community scholars, Yeshiva University's GPATS, and non-rabbinic school teachers. So long as no rabbinic or ordained title such as "Maharat" is used in these positions, and so long as there is no implication of ordination or a rabbinic status, this resolution is inapplicable.

4. <http://gt.cross-currents.com/archives/2015/06/15/ordination-of-insubordination/>

5. <http://www.hakirah.org/Vol%2011%20Schachter.pdf>

6. http://www.torahweb.org/torah/2004/parsha/rsch_dvorim2.html

7. <http://www.hakirah.org/Vol%2011%20Brody.pdf>

8. <http://text.rcarabbis.org/the-view-of-rav-joseph-b-soloveitchik-zt%E2%80%9DI-on-the-ordination-of-women-by-aryeh-a-frimer/>

9. http://www.yctorah.org/component/option.com_docman/task.doc_view/gid.1393/

10. Available at <http://www.rabbis.org/news/article.cfm?id=105835>