

HALACHIC AND HASHKAFIC ISSUES IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

165 - WOMEN AND THE IDF - MITZVA OR MINEFIELD? PART 2 OU ISRAEL CENTER - SPRING 2020

A] INTRODUCTION FROM PART 1

In¹ Part 1 we saw the following:-

- The clear precedent from Tanach is that women were never recruited into the Jewish army, although they did sometimes play a critical role as protagonists.
- The Mishna in Sota rules that, in a Milchemet Mitzva, all are called to the war effort - even the chatan and the kallah from their wedding. Yet the Gemara in Kiddushin says clearly that it is not the 'derech' of women to wage war.
- The Rambam appears to rules like the Mishna in Sota that women are required to fight in a Milchemet Mitzva, although the Radvaz, and other mefarshim, soften this psak by explaining that women can play an important support, technical and logistic role in war, but do not fight in combat.
- In contemporary times, most poskim classify the wars being fought by Israel as Milchemet Mitzva, so the question of women's role in the IDF is relevant. However, most poskim², across the range of Charedi and Religious Zionist communities, are clearly opposed - on halachic and hashkafic grounds - to religious women drafting into the IDF.
- Nevertheless, the number of women from the Religious Zionist community who choose to join the IDF, rather than enroll in Sherut Leumi, has increased dramatically over the last 10 years and now stands at around 2,500 per year - around 30% of the Dati girls graduating from high schools and Ulpanot. The majority of these girls are going to the army against the psak of their community Rabbis and against the advice of their teachers.

B] WOMEN AND WEAPONS

B1] WEAPONS AND CROSS-DRESSING

1. לא יהיה כלי גבר על אשה ולא ילבש גבר שמלת אשה כי תועבת ה' אלקיך כל עשה אלה:

דברים כ"ה

The Torah prohibits cross-dressing and labels it a 'toeva'.

2. לא יהי תקון זין דגבר על אתא ולא יתקן גבר בתקוני אתא ארי מרחק קדם יי אלהך כל עביד אלן

תרגום אונקלוס שם

The Targum Unkelos³ translates this as a prohibition that women may not carry weapons.

3. לא יהיה כלי גבר על אשה - מאי תלמוד לומר? אם שלא ילבש איש שמלת אשה ואשה שמלת איש, הרי כבר נאמר 'תועבה' היא, ואין כאן תועבה! אלא, שלא ילבש איש שמלת אשה וישב בין הנשים, ואשה שמלת איש ותשב בין האנשים. רבי אליעזר בן יעקב אומר: מנין שלא תצא אשה בכלי זיין למלחמה? ת"ל: לא יהיה כלי גבר על אשה. ולא ילבש גבר שמלת אשה - שלא יתקן איש בתקוני אשה

נויר נט.

The discussion in the Gemara brings two views. The Tana Kama rules that the Torah prohibition on cross dressing is only where that serves as a means to gender mixing which will itself lead to sexual licence. R. Eliezer ben Yaakov rules that the very act of cross dressing, irrespective of context, is a Torah prohibition. For a women, he identifies this as taking weapons into war. For men - as performing feminine acts of person grooming.

1. Thanks again to my son, Asher, for his multiple comments and suggestions for this topic and the source sheet.

2. We quoted in Part 1 the notable exceptions.

3. Many of the poskim refer to the Smag, brought in the Beit Yosef OC 285, that the Targum Unkelos was written with ruach hakodesh.

To download more source sheets and audio shiurim visit www.rabbimanning.com

4. בכלי זיין למלחמה - כדמתרגמין לא יבא תיקון זיין דגבר

רש"י נזיר נט.

Rashi clearly identifies the position of R. Eliezer ben Yaakov with that of the Targum Unkelos (above).⁴

5. לא תעדה אשה עדי האיש כגון שתשים בראשה מצנפת או כובע או תלבש שריון וכיוצא בו או שתגלח ראשה כאיש. ולא יעדה איש עדי אשה הכל כמנהג המדינה. איש שעדה עדי אשה ואשה שעדתה עדי איש לוקין ...

רמב"ם הלכות עבודה זרה פרק יב הלכה י

The Rambam rules that it is a Torah prohibition for women to wear military armor etc, but in all such matter we judge by the minhagim of the land (see below). Note that the Rambam does NOT mention actually going to war in this context. The prohibition seems to be the actual wearing of the weapon⁵.

6. ופסק רבינו כראצ"י שמשנתו קצ ונקי, וכן תירגס אונקלום ... ולא הלריך שישב איש בין הנשים או האשה בין האנשים

כסף משנה שם

The Kesef Mishne understands that the Rambam is ruling like R. Eliezer ben Yaakov - that the prohibition is objective and does not depend on the actual mixing of genders.

7. כת"ק דרבי אליעזר בן יעקב

הגהות מיימוניות הלכות עבודה זרה פרק יב הלכה י אות ו'

Nevertheless, other mefarshim understand that the Rambam is in fact ruling like the Tana Kama. This would have significant implication as to whether the factor of actual sexual mixing should be taken into account in the psak or not.

8. ת"ל לא יהיה כלי גבר על אשה - וזה שמלינו זיעל אשת חזר הקיני, שלא הרגתו לסיסרא בכלי זיין חלא כמו שנאמר יקה' ליתקד תש"למנה (שופטים ה:כו)

רש"י שם

Rashi also points out that this is the reason that Yael did NOT use a sword to kill Sisera, but a tent-peg⁶!

9. (כו) טבתא יעל אתת חבר שלמא דקמת מה דכתבי בספר אורייתא דמשה לא יהוי תקון זין דגבר על אתתא ולא יתקו גבר בתקוני אתתא אלהו ידהא לסכתא אושיטת וימינא לארזפתא דנפחין למתבר רשיעין ואנוסין מחתיה לסיסרא תברת רישיה פצעת מוחיה אעברת סכתא בצדעיה:

תרגום יונתן נביאים שופטים ה:כו

Rashi is actually based on Targum⁷ Yonatan⁸ which brings a tradition that Yael chose a tent-peg⁹ to kill Sisera, rather than a sword, in order not to transgress¹⁰ the prohibition of Lo Tilbash¹¹.

10. (ה) לא יהיה כלי גבר על אשה. מנע הכתוב כלי זיין מן האשה כדי שלא תלא למלחמה ויהיה סבה לזנות. וכן האיש אם ילכש שמלת אשה ושיתערב עם הנשים, כל זה תועבת ה'. וכן דרשו רז"ל: כי תועבת ה' אלהיך, דבר המוציא לידי תועבה.

רבינו בחיי דברים כב:

Rabbeynu Bachya identifies the prohibition of women carrying weapons as a means to avoid men and women mixing in the army, which will lead to znut.¹²

4. However, the addition by R. Eliezer ben Yaakov of the words 'to war' (which do not appear in the Targum) may indicated that his concern is not simply the carrying of the weapon *per se*, but bringing weapons into an army environment. Many of the poskim opposed to women's involvement in the army use this as a supporting source. (See R. Eliezer Waldenburg Hilchot Medina 2:3:6.

5. In many societies until recent times, wearing a sword or other weapon was an inherently masculine symbol. Sometimes this was also expressed as a prohibition on woman carrying a weapon - see http://www.hurstwic.org/history/articles/manufacturing/text/viking_weapons_overview.htm concerning Viking culture.

6. As noted, the Tzitz Eliezer (Hilchot Medina 2:3:6) brings this as a proof that women may not violate the prohibition of Lo Tilbash, even in a Milchemet Mitzva.

7. Also found in many other midrashim - see Midrash Mishlei 31:38 which connects the words in Eishet Chayil - to Yael, who carefully chose her weapon so as not to breach the mitzva of Lo Tilbash.

8. Attributed to R. Yonatan b. Uziel. Academics agrees that this is ancient, dating from around the 2nd Century CE.

9. Compare with the Order of the Hatchet - a medieval Spanish honorary title bestowed upon women and based on an episode in 1149 in Tortosa, Spain, where the women launched an attack on the Moslem siege of the city using hatchets and other tools they could put their hands on. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Order_of_the_Hatchet

10. This is particular striking in light of the understanding of Chazal (Nazir 23b) that Yael was married and nevertheless had sexual relations with Sisera in order to kill him. This relationship, which is clearly adulterous, is classified as an 'Aveira Lishma', which was necessary to save the Jewish people. Yet in spite of this openness to justify Yael's actions, Chazal still insisted that she did not use a man's weapon in order not to transgress Lo Tilbash!

11. See Shu't Radvaz CM 3:73 who raises the contradiction with the Targum Yonatan on Chumash which translates Lo Tilbash as a prohibition on women not to wear tallit and tefillin. The Radvaz uses this as a strong proof to support the position of the Aruch (11C Rome) that the Targum Yonatan on Chumash was not written by R. Yonatan b. Uziel. (This is also implied in Megila 3a which states that the Targum on Navi was composed by Yonatan b. Uziel.) In fact, this translation of Chumash is the Targum Yerushalmi, which was much later. As such, it is often referred to as Targum Pseudo-Yonatan.

12. The IDF keeps men and women in very separate dorms on base, but that does not deter significant social fraternizing. Also, in mixed units, although formal separation can be

To download more source sheets and audio shiurim visit www.rabbimanning.com

11. (ה) לא יהיה כלי גבר על אשה - לפי שהוא גנאי ופריזות. ולכך לא נעלה יעל חרב או חנית אלא המקצת והיתד למחץ רקת סיסרא. ונסמכה פרשה זו כאן לפי שדבר למעלה צעניני מלחמה, ואשה לא נצרכת רק להקים זרע, ואם תלך למלחמה תרגיל את עלמה ליד זנות וכן אם ילצב גבר שמלת אשה.

חוקוני דברים כ"ב:

The Chizkuni goes further, making a more general statement about the role of women in society¹³, which will address below.

B2] HOW ARE 'FEMININE' AND 'MASCULINE' DEFINED?

- One of the key factors in Lo Tilbash is understanding how the definitions of 'feminine' and 'masculine' change as the norms of society change. Whilst it was once considered highly effeminate, and prohibited, for men to look in a mirror, this is no longer the case.
- Is it 'effeminate' for a man to dye his hair¹⁴ or have a manicure in today's world?
- By the same token, in a society where women routinely carry weapons, would there still be a prohibition on women?
- Which sectors of society should act as gauge for this test? It remains the case that most religiously observant women do NOT routinely carry weapons, whereas most religiously observant men WOULD look in a mirror.

12. ... לא יהיה כלי גבר על אשה. וכל אשה שתתקשט באחד מתכשיטי האנשים המפורסמים בעיר ההיא שזה הוא תכשיט מיוחד לאנשים לוקה ... ודע שזאת הפעולה, כלומר היות הנשים מתקשטות בתכשיטי האנשים או האנשים בתכשיטי הנשים, פעמים תיעשה לעורך הטבע לזמה כמו שהוא מפורסם אצל הזונים. ופעמים ייעשה למינים מעבודת עבודה זרה כמו שהוא מבואר בספרים המחברים לזה ...

ספר המצוות לרמב"ם מצות לא תעשה לט-מ

The Rambam in Sefer HaMitzvot stresses that the prohibition applies only the items specifically identified in that locale as restricted to the other gender. He also clearly gives the context and reason for the mitzva - where it promotes sexual licence or in the context of idolatry.

13. לא תעדה אשה עדי האיש, כגון שתשים בראשה מצנפת או כובע או תלבש שריון וכיוצא בו (ממלבושי האיש לפי מנהג המקום ההוא)

שולחן ערוך יורה דעה הלכות לא ילבש גבר שמלת אשה סימן קפב סעיף ה

The Shulchan Aruch rules the halacha of women not wearing weaponry, but the Rema qualifies this by ruling that this depends on the local minhag as to what men and women behave.

B3] CROSS-DRESSING FOR PRACTICAL PURPOSES

14. דביתהו דרבי יהודה נפקת, נקטת עמרא עבדה גלימא דהוטבי. כד נפקת לשוקא מיכסיא ביה, וכד נפיק רבי יהודה לצלויי הוה מיכסי ומצלי. וכד מיכסי ביה הוה מברך: ברוך שעטני מעיל.

נדרים מט:

The Gemara relates that R. Yehuda would sometimes wear the same warm coat as his wife.

15. דרך עידוי וקישוט אסור אצל אש עושה כן מפני החמה או לנה או גשמים אין אסור, כן נראה לי פשוט. וכן משמע מדכתירו צסימן קנ"ו להסתפר צמראה כשיש לורך לעשות כן. ובאורה חיים סימן תרל"ו הביא רמ"א דאפילו מפני שמחת פורים המנהג להתייר צזה, ואף על גב דיש אסורים. ומו"ח ז"ל כתב שיש לחסור את זה ... והשומע לאסור תצוא עליו צרכה כי יש הרבה ממשולות חס ושלוס מזה כשהולכין ציחד צלי היכר איש או אשה.

ט"ז יורה דעה סימן קפב ס' ד'

The Taz rules that if a man is using something normally associated with women, but for practical and functional reasons, this will not be included in the prohibition. This may also be true of cross-dressing on Purim, although many are opposed in that case¹⁵ since it can easily lead to inappropriate mixing.

imposed when on base, it is often impossible to enforce in the field - eg in cramped pill-box watchtowers around Yehuda and Shomron.

13. See also Ibn Ezra on this verse.

14. This question has been dealt with by many poskim, most famously Igrot Moshe YD 2:61.

15. It seems that the opposition is largely focused on the Purim case, given the obviously levity of the atmosphere. According to this approach, the heter is based on the clearly non-sexual context of wearing a warm coat. R. Alfred Cohen, in his article *Drafting Women for the Army*, (Journal of Halacha Vol XVI p 26) suggests that, according to the view that Lo Tilbash is due to the concern of Chukat HaGoy, this leniency of functionality may not apply. However, Chukat HaGoy has its own complex rubric and may itself depend significantly

B4] DECORATION VS SELF-DEFENCE

- Some poskim¹⁶ have ruled that the prohibition of women carry weapons relates only to the wearing of weapons as a 'tachshit' - an accessory indicating masculinity, and not when carried for self-defence.

16. **שאלה:** בישובי הספר מוטלת חובת השמירה בבתי הספר על המורות והגנות, האם מותר להן מצד ההלכה להתאמן בנשק, וכן לשאת נשק להגן על עצמן ועל תלמידי בתי הספר שבפיקוחן מן המרצחים המחבלים?
תשובה: הדבר ברור שבנידון שלנו שיש חשש של סכנת נפשות מפחד המרצחים המחבלים ששמו להם למטרה להרוג נפשות ולזרוע הרס וחורבן במדינת ישראל, מותר גם לנשים להתאמן ולישא נשק להגן על עצמן ועל תלמידי בתי הספר שבהשגחתן, מחשש פעולה זדונית של המחבלים, אשר לא ישאו פנים לזקן ונער לא יחוננו. שאין לך דבר העומד בפני פקוח נפש. וכבר כתב רבינו יהודה החסיד בספר חסידים (סימן ר') וזו לשונו: עת לעשות לה' הפרו תורתך! לפיכך אם צרו עכו"ם על עיר מישראל, וכן נשים שהולכות בדרך, ויראות פן יפגעו בהן עכו"ם ויאנסו אותן, מותר להן ללכת בבגדי גברים ולחגור עצמן בחרב, כדי שיהיו סבורים העכו"ם שהם גברים.
 בנידון שלנו שאין כוונת המורות בנשיאת הנשק כדי להתדמות לגברים, אלא רק להגן על נפשותיהן ועל נפשות תלמידיהן שבפיקוחן והשגחתן, נראה שהדבר ברור שאין בזה משום לא יהיה כלי גבר על אשה.
בסיכום: מותר למורות ולגנות שביישובי הספר להתאמן ולאחוז בנשק בעת שמירתן על בתי הספר, ובלבד שיקפידו מאוד על כל כללי הצניעות בעת אימונן, כראוי לבנות ישראל הכשרות, ולא יתייחדו עם גבר זר בשעת האימונים בנשק.

ש"ת יחיה דעת חלק ה סימן נה

Rav Ovadia Yosef rules that women may carry weapons where needed for pikuach nefesh¹⁷. He also points out the the prohibition of Lo Tilbash applies in the context of women who want to look like men to encourage mixing, which is not the case in this context. He warns however, that they must be extra careful during training, and when in a mixed environment, to maintain appropriate standards of tzniut.

B5] LIGHT VS HEAVY WEAPONRY

17. והרמב"ם, שנקט כדוגמה לכלי גבר על אשה, שלובשת שריון, נראה שמפרש כן מה שכתוב ר' אליעזר בן יעקב 'כלי זין למלחמה'. דהיינו כלים שאיו רגילים ללבושם אלא לשם הגנה בזמן מלחמה, שהסכנה מרובה. כי הוא כבד, מכביד על הנושא (שמואל א' יז-לח-לט). על כן, זה כלל כלי גבר. לא כן החרב, שהוא כלי נשק קל והיו רגילים לשאתו תמיד לשם הגנה עצמית, ולא דווקא בזמן מלחמה, וזה אינו כלי גבר במיוחד.

הרב שאול ישראלי, התורה והמדינה, ד' עמ' 222 בהערה

Rav Shaul Yisraeli¹⁸ makes a distinction between heavy weaponry (more precisely 'shiryon' - body armour¹⁹) which is used only in combat²⁰ and light weaponry which is normal for people to carry around for personal protection even in peace time.

- Conclusion: the halachic prohibition of women carrying weapons, although relevant, is unlikely to be a deciding factor in whether women serve in the army. Although there are poskim to prohibit this strongly, even non-combat roles²¹ will often require personal protection with small-arms, and strong halachic basis exists to permit this²².
- The central issue in the debate on religious women in the IDF will be the important, but amorphous, concept of tzniut and, more broadly, the appropriate role of women in society. We now turn to this with an examination of 'kol kevuda bat melech penima'.

C] KOL KEVUDA BAT MELECH PENIMA

18. במה דברים אמורים שמזירין אנשים אלו מעורכי המלחמה? במלחמת הרשות. אבל במלחמת מצוה הכל יוצאין ואפילו חותן מחדרו וכלה מחופתה.

רמב"ם הלכות מלכים פרק ז הלכה ד

In Part 1, we saw that the Rambam appears to rule clearly that women are to be drafted to fight in a Milchemet Mitzva.

on context.

16. See R. Shmuel Tuvia Stern - *Sherut Leumi Shel Nashim*, HaTorah VaHamedina 7-8 p 51-52.

17. It would seem that Yael had the time and opportunity to chose her own weapon since Sisera was sleeping. Had there been a situation of pikuach nefesh, she could have used a sword. It is also reasonable to assume that there would be no weapons to hand in her tent, with all the men away at war. Judith used Holofernes' sword to remove his head (Judith 13:8). David used Golyat's sword to remove his head (1 Shumuel 17:51). Where was Sisera's sword? Perhaps his sword had been lost as he fled, but the implications of the Midrash are that she could have used his sword and chose not to.

18. See also Igrot Moshe OC 4:75:3 who rules that a woman may carry a pistol for self-defense but not a rifle. In the modern context, an M16 would be treated as a 'light' weapon and most female soldiers would be required to carry one.

19. Full combat body armour is extremely heavy and often suitable only for men.

20. Women in charge of remotely operated drones and other similar techno-weaponary would not appear to be prohibited at all under this mitzva.

21. As we saw in the Radvaz in Part 1 and also below.

22. See also *Nesiat Neshkek Al Yedei Nashim VeSherutan BeTzava* - R. Yehuda Henkin, Techumin 28 p271. Although Rav Henkin give strong halachic support for women carrying weapons, he makes it very clear (beginning of section 2) that he opposes in principle religious women drafting into the IDF.

19. בד"א שמחזירין וכו'. זרייתא כלשון רזינו. אלא דקשב - וכי דרך הנשים לעשות מלחמה דקתני וכלה מחופתה? והא כתיב (תהלים מה:ד) *כָּל-פְּצוּקֶה צֶת-מַלְכָּה פְּנִימָה!* וי"ל דה"ק - כיון דחתן יולא מחדרו, כלה יולאה מחופתה שאינה נוכחת ימי חופה. ואפשר דצמלחמת מלוא הנשים היו מספקות מים ומזון לבעליהן. וכן המנהג היום צערציות

רדב"ז על הרמב"ם הלכות מלכים פרק ז הלכה ז

The Radvaz²³ however raises the statement of Chazal that it is not the 'derech' of women to go to war. He also quotes the verse in Tehillim - פְּנִימָה - כָּל-פְּצוּקֶה צֶת-מַלְכָּה - from which proves that women should not going into combat roles, but to provide food and supplies for their husbands²⁴.

C1] PSHAT AND CONTEXT

20. (י) בנות מלכים ביקרותיה נצבה שגל ליימיה בכתם אופיר: (יא) שמעי בת וראי והפי אנה ושכתי עמך ובית אביך: (יב) ויתאן המלך יפך כיהוא אדנה והשתחוי לו: (יג) ובת צרן במנחה פנד: יחלו עשירי עם: (יד) כל פבודה בת מלך פנימה ממשבצות זהב לבושה: (טו) לרקמות תובל למלך בתולות אחריה רעותיה מובאות לך: (טז) תובלנה בשמחת וגיל תבאינה בהיכל מלך: (יז) תחת אבתיך יהיו בנגד תשיתמו לשרים בכל הארץ: (יח) אפירה שמך בכל דר ודר על גן עמים יהודך לעלם ועד:

תהלים פרק מה

10. Kings' daughters are among your favourites; at your right hand stands the queen in gold of Ophir. 11. Listen, daughter, and consider, and incline your ear; forget also your own people, and your father's house; 12. So shall the king desire your beauty; for he is your lord; and do homage unto him. 13. And, daughter of Tyre, the richest of the people shall entreat your favour with a gift. 14. **All glorious is the king's daughter within the palace**; her raiment is of chequer work inwrought with gold. 15. She shall be led unto the king on richly woven stuff; the virgins her companions in her train being brought to you. 16. They shall be led with gladness and rejoicing; they shall enter into the king's palace. 17. Instead of your fathers shall be thy sons, whom you shall make princes in all the land. 18. I will make your name to be remembered in all generations; therefore shall the peoples praise you for ever and ever.

Tehillim 45²⁵ seems to address the marriage of a foreign queen to a Jewish king, praising her qualities, her glory, and her choice to join the Jewish people.

21. (א) שיר זה יסדוהו בני קרח לכבוד המלך והמלכה ביום חתונתו וביום שמחת לבו עם בת מלך צור שנתגיירה. ויכול להיות שנתיסד בימי שלמה שלקה בת מלך צור וגיירה, וע"ז קראו בשם שיר ידידות:

מלבי"ם תהלים מה:א

The Malbim identifies it as a song written for the marriage of Shlomo²⁶ and the princess of Tzur, who converted.

22. **כל כבודה בת מלך פנימה** - בארגו שהביא למנחה הונח פנימה כל כבודה של בת מלך, כל דברים היקרים ונכבדים הראויים לבת מלך, תכשיטין יקרים וכדומה, וגם הונח שם לבושה ממשבצות זהב, לבוש יקר הנעשה ממשבצות זהב, זה המנחה שהביאו עשירי עם:

מלבי"ם תהלים מה:ד

On a pshat level, the verse 'kol kevuda ..' refers to the luggage²⁷ of the princess, containing all the splendid gift given to her, being taken into the palace. The Da'at Mikra commentary on this verse explains that the verse refers to the princess entering the palace (after her luggage) to go to (and remain in) the Beit HaNashim inside.

C2] DRASH AND HALACHIC APPLICATION

23. (דברים יט:יז) *ועמדו שני האנשים* - בעדים הכתוב מדבר. אתה אומר: בעדים, או אינו אלא בבעלי דינין? אמרת? וכי אנשים באין לדין, נשים אין באות לדין? ואם נפשך לומר, נאמר כאן 'שני' ונאמר להלן 'שני' - מה להלן בעדים, אף כאן בעדים. מאי 'אם נפשך' לומר? וכי תימא: אשה לאו אורחה משום כל כבודה בת מלך פנימה, נאמר כאן שני ונאמר להלן שני, מה להלן בעדים, אף כאן בעדים.

שבעות ל.

The Gemara in Shavuot brings two proof that the verse in Devarim 19:17 relates to witnesses and not litigants. First, Chazal bring a sevara - how can it refer to litigants when it says 'men' - don't women also come to court as litigants? Nevertheless a person could object that women don't 'normally' come to court due to the pasuk 'kol kevuda bat melech', so the Gemara supplies a second proof.

23. Rabbi David ibn Zimra, 16C Spain/Egypt/Eretz Yisrael.

24. We saw in Part 1 other mefarshim who take this further to include general logistic support. As to why providing logistic support does not breach the principle of 'kol kevuda bat melech penima', one could answer that it will primarily be done indoors and not in the field. Rav Shaul Yisraeli (HaTorah VeHaMedina 4 footnote to p 226) writes that such logistic support constitutes pikuach nefesh, and thus overrides 'kol kevuda'. This would significantly limit the application of 'kol kevuda' since many roles of women, especially in combat, constitute pikuach nefesh.

25. I have used the JPS translation, adapted slightly for modern English.

26. See also the Da'at Mikra commentary in the summary after this chapter, which discusses (without conclusion) whether the Jewish king referred to in this chapter of Tehillim is David, Shlomo or Ahav (on his marriage to Izevel).

27. Although almost all translations - Jewish and non-Jewish - refer to the glory of the princess and not to her luggage! See <https://www.biblegateway.com/verse/en/Psalms%2045:13>

• It seems that 'kol kevuda' communicates that most women prefer not to take public roles. It nevertheless comes after Chazal agreed that women may indeed be litigants. It does not therefore indicate that women may not, or should not, be litigants. Rather, it suggests that the approach of many women will be to prefer more private roles (which is praiseworthy, as we see in the context of the verse).

24. אשה שגלתה לערי מקלט - בעלה חייב במזונותיה ואם מספקת, ואמר לה צאי מעשה ידיך במזונותיך, רשאי. מספקת, מאי למימרא? מהו דתימא: כל כבודה בת מלך פנימה, קמ"ל.

גיטין יב.

The Gemara discusses the case of a woman who has killed unintentionally and must go to a City of Refuge. Must her husband continue to support her financially? It responds that, if she is able to generate sufficient of her own income, he can tell her to use that. But since this is the normal halachic position, why would the Gemara reiterate it specifically for a City of Refuge? The Gemara answers that we might have applied the principle of 'kol kevuda bat melech penima', which would prevent her from working, but in fact we do NOT say that and she may go out to find a job.

25. כבודה בת מלך - כל ישראל בני מלכים
פנימה - לנועה ואין דרכה ללכת ולסבב צעיר שאינה משם, ואין מכירין אותה להצביא לה מלאכה צביתה אלא אם כן מסבבת צעיר למזרח מלאכה להשתכר

רש"י שם

Rashi explains why 'kol kevuda bat melech penima' is especially applicable in this case. Since she is in a strange town where people don't yet know her to bring her new business, she will have to go around the town to generate business contacts. This might be seen as a breach of 'kol kevuda'.

• We see here that the principle of 'kol kevuda' applies to a woman being unnecessarily out in the public sphere, although it is clearly situation specific. In the case of the Ir Miklat, the conclusion of the Gemara was that it is NOT a problem for this woman to be in the public sphere building her business, even in a new place where people do not know her.

C3] DRASH AND HASHKAFIC APPLICATION

26. כל כבודה בת מלך פנימה - כל המצנעת עצמה זכתה משבצות זהב לבושה. א"ר לוי זכתה שתעמיד ממנה לובשי בגדי כהונה גדולה שנאמר ועשית משבצות זהב. אמרו שבעה בנים היו לקמחית וכלם שמשו בכהונה גדולה. אמרו לה חכמים מה מעשים טובים יש בידך? אמרה להם העבודה מעולם לא ראו קורות ביתי שערות ראשי. קראו עליה פסוק זה - כל כבודה בת מלך פנימה. וכן הזהיר המקום (בראשית א-כח) מלאנו את הארץ ונכבשה - האיש כובש את אשתו שלא תהא הולכת בשוק שלא תבא לידי קלקלה, דכתיב ותצא דינה בת לאה:

ילקוט שמעוני תהלים רמו תשנ

The Midrashic²⁸, and therefore hashkafic, application of 'kol kevuda' is much more direct, and encourages women to pursue an internal and inside role, warning of the dangers of women straying to much into the public domain!

27. לפי שכל אשה יש לה לצאת ולילך לבית אביה לבקרו ולבית האבל ולבית המשתה לגמול חסד לרעותיה ולקרובותיה כדי שיבואו הם לה, שאינה בבית הסוהר עד שלא תצא ולא תבוא! אבל גנאי הוא לאשה שתהיה יוצאה תמיד (משלי ז-יב) פגעים בחוץ פגעים ברחובות.²⁹ ויש לבעל למנוע אשתו מזה ולא יניחנה לצאת אלא כמו פעם אחת בחודש או פעמים בחודש כפי הצורך. שאין יופי לאשה אלא לישוב בזוית ביתה שכן כתוב (תהלים מה) כל כבודה בת מלך פנימה.

רמב"ם הלכות אישות פרק יג הלכה יא

The Rambam brings this idea in the halacha too, and attempts to strike a balance. On the one hand, a woman must not be a prisoner in her home³⁰ and she must be able to get out into the public domain to perform mitzvot and necessary jobs. But for a woman to be 'constantly out' (not for mitzva reasons) is deemed inappropriate. In the Rambam's world³¹, he rules that the husband should not allow his wife out more than once or twice a month (again, for non-mitzva purposes).

28. This Midrashic source (Yalkut Shimoni) is quite late - around 12C. Nevertheless, it reflects themes in much earlier midrashim. See for example Vayikra Rabba, Acharei Mot 20:11 on the connection with Kimchit, and Bereishit Rabba 8:28 on the issue of a man preventing his wife from leaving the home.

29. The context of this verse from Mishlei is also a reference to a rebellious and predatory harlot who is out-of-control!

30. Chazal also address this theme in the account of Papos ben Yehuda, a tyrannical husband who locked his wife in the home so that she would not speak with other men. Eventually she escaped and started an affair with another man! This become more interesting in light of the Gemara in Shabbat 104b, which was censored by the Church. There, Chazal identify Papos b Yehuda as the husband of Mary (Magdalene?) who was the mother of Jesus! Mary escaped from the home to conduct an affair with a Roman, Pandera. For more on this see the book *Jesus in the Talmud* by Peter Schäfer. The clear implication is that trying to lock up one's wife, may produce very long-term consequences for the world!

31. Which was of course a mediaeval Islamic society in which the Rambam's position may have been quite lenient!

28. 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. "שהאיש דרכו לכבש ואין האשה דרכה לכבש". ושתפקידים של משרה, של משפט ושל עדות, אינם שייכים לה, וכל כבודתה 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.

מאמרי הראיה - על בחירת נשים א

When Rav Kook³² was asked about women voting in, and standing for, election in the first Yishuv elections in the early 1920s, he responded, as did almost all other poskim, that it was prohibited. One of his arguments is 'kol kevuda'.

• When applying these concepts into our contemporary lives, It seems clear that 'kol kevuda' is a halachic and hashkafic principle which cannot be ignored, but which must be translated into the context of the actual life of men and women in our times. No posek would apply the psak of the Rambam literally today and rule that a husband may not allow his wife out of the home for non-mitzva purposes³³ more than once or twice a month!!

29. ועוד נראה שגבולות ה'כבודתה' בת מלך פנימה' תלויים במנהגי המקומות. ורק במקום שדרכן של נשים שלא לצאת לגמרי מביתהם יש בזה משום פרצת גדר ואך בדורותינו עובדות בנות ישראל כשרות במשרדים שונים, בבתי חולים, בגני ילדים ובתי ספר ואין פוצה פה ומצפצף!

רב שאול ישראלי התורב והמדינה ד' עמ' 226 בהערה

Rav Shaul Yisraeli points out that, in a time when women are very present in the workplace³⁴, the parameters of 'kol kevuda' must reflect the norms and practice of the religiously observant women of the time.

• This means that 'kol kevuda' must be applied intelligently and sensibly as it pertains to today's world.³⁵
• However, it must be applied and cannot be dismissed as 'merely' hashkafic or aggadic. If the realistic assessment is that a religious young woman would likely be negatively influenced by being in an army environment - eg to lower her standards of tzniut in personal relationships, behavior and dress - 'kol kevuda' will be a very relevant factor. Certainly, if the environment will pressure her strongly to stop being shomer negiah and encourage her to adopt a more and more secular value system, this should be major reason for her to avoid such a choice.

C4] TZNIYUT

30. כִּי־תֵצֵא מִחֲנֵה עַל־אִיבֵיךָ וְנִשְׁמְרָתְךָ מִכָּל דְּבַר רָע

דברים כ"ג

The Torah explicitly warns us to guard against the bad influences of military life.

31. וכידוע צמנכהגי המחנות היולאות למלחמה, כי יאכלו כל תועבה, יגזרו ויחמסו ולא יתבטשו אפילו צניאוף וכל נבלה. הישר צבני אדם צטבעו יתלבש אכזריות וחמה כלאת מחנה על אויב. ועל כן הזכיר צו הכתוב, ונשמרת מכל דבר רע.

רמב"ן שם

The Ramban explains that men behave notoriously badly in the battlefield! Given the reality of impending death, regular norms of behavior (especially sexual) are rejected and a much more bestial side of man is allowed to emerge. This requires extreme care. In particular, the presence of women on the battlefield was almost always a recipe for extreme sexual licence³⁶ and violence³⁷.

32. Rav Kook was very ahead of his time on many 20C issues, but had very conventional positions on women's issues and did not embrace modern feminism in any way. This line of thought has been continued through many of his talmidim. See for instance Ein Aya Shabbat 27a.

33. One could debate whether and to what extent shopping is a mitzva and whether one even needs to leave the home to do it these days!

34. Rav Yisraeli refers to more traditional women's careers - nursing, teaching etc. 50 years later, this has expanded rapidly, even in the Charedi world, to include professional and more public-facing roles. Consider Ruchie Freier in New York - a judge in the New York Criminal Court, from the Bobov community.

35. See <http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/176571> where Rabbi Shlomo Riskin makes the important point that, in our modern world, women are no longer subject to their parents' authority and control more than men (as opposed to the classic position expressed in Mishna Ketubot 5:4-5), and women are not subject to their husband's authority more than men to their wives. R. Riskin founded the pre-army mechina program at Midreshet Lindenbaum which prepares religious women for army service. He states: "We advise every young woman who is enlisting, like every young man, to prepare for military service through serious Torah study, learning the relevant passages in the Gemara, learning halakha, and becoming familiar with her society and culture, while building her coping skills".

36. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women_in_ancient_warfare: "1st century - There were detailed reports of women accompanying their men on Germanic battlefields to provide morale support. Tacitus mentions them twice He writes in detail how the women would gather behind the warhost, and show their breasts to flagging warriors while screaming that their loss that day would mean the enemy gaining these as slaves. ... Slavery was the fate of cowards and the unlucky - and letting one's women fall into that fate was a hideous deed. Thus the men were encouraged to fight harder." Consider the plight of the Eshet Yefat Toar and the sexual context of her presence on the battlefield.

37. Sexual violence by soldiers is a standard accompaniment to war - see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wartime_sexual_violence. Perhaps the height of absurdity in anti-IDF propaganda is a 2007 research paper in Hebrew University that found Israeli soldiers to be deeply racist due to their NOI raping and abusing Palestinian women - see <http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/124674#Ulz0N1DfBTI>

32. (יג) וְיָד תְּהִיָּה לְךָ מְחוּץ לַמַּחֲנֶה וְיִצְאָתָּ שָׁמָּה חוּץ: (יד) וְיָתֵד תְּהִיָּה לְךָ עַל אֲזֻנֶיךָ וְהָיָה בְּשִׁבְתְּךָ חוּץ וְחִפְרָתָהּ בָּהּ וְשִׁבְתָּ וְכִסִּיתָ אֶת צִאֲנֶיךָ: (טו) כִּי ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ מִתְּהַלֵּךְ בְּקִרְבְּךָ מִתְּהַלֵּךְ וְלִתְּת אֵיבֶיךָ לְפָנֶיךָ וְהָיָה מִחֲנִיף קְדוֹשׁ וְלֹא יִרְאֶה בְּךָ עֲרוֹת דָּבָר וְשֵׁב מֵאֲחֵרֶיךָ

דברים כג יג-טו

The Torah includes a mitzvah to keep the 'battlefield bathroom' clean and dignified. This involves a constant awareness that God's existence and presence is real at all times and that, as such - our lives and surroundings must remain 'kadosh'. 'Ervat davar' is also a clear reference to keeping sexual misconduct³⁸ out of the camp.

33. הַגִּיד לְךָ אֲדָם מַה טוֹב וּמָה ה' דּוֹרֵשׁ מִמֶּךָ כִּי אַם עֲשׂוֹת מִשְׁפָּט וְאַהֲבַת חֶסֶד וְהִצַּנֵּע לְכַת עִם אֱלֹהֶיךָ (מלודת ליון: כי אם - ... וללכת עם אלהיך בדרכי מלכותי וזנע לא צפרסום רב ולהתיכר: והצנע - מלשון זניעות והסתר)

מיכה ו-ח ומצודת ציון שם

The concept of tzniut is one of the three fundamental principles of Judaism, as outlined by Micha. One explanation of 'tzniut' is 'hidden' - not to conduct one's religious life in an exhibitionist and arrogant way

34. להיות צנוע דכתיב (דברים כג) והיה מחניך קדוש, וכתיב (מיכה ו') והצנע לכת עם אלהיך

ספר מצוות קטן מצוה נו

The Sefer Mitzvot Katan³⁹ learns that there is a Torah mitzvah of tzniut from והיה מחניך קדוש.

35. ואלו יוצאות שלא בכתובה: העוברת על דת משה ויהודית

משנה מסכת כתובות ז:

A woman loses her rights to a ketubah if she breaches 'Dat Moshe' or 'Dat Yehudit'.

36. דת יהודית - שנכגו זנות ישראל ואע"ג דלא כתיבא

רש"י כתובות עב.

Rashi defines Dat Yehudit as the custom (minhag) of Jewish women, even though such a custom may have no specific written halachic source.

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

רמב"ם הלכות אישות פרק כד

The Rambam also defines Dat Yehudit as the 'minhagim of tzniut'.

• A related question is that of whether women may wear pants for army uniform or insist on a skirt. For training/field uniform ('Bet'), pants are necessary⁴⁰ due to the training, crawling, running, jumping etc. Aside for the practical need for pants⁴¹ in these situations, they are likely to be far more tzanua than a skirt! For dress uniform ('Alef') which is worn in civilian life, there is little justification⁴² for a religious woman to wear pants⁴³.

D] THE UNDERLYING PHILOSOPHICAL BATTLE

Ultimately, the REAL underlying issue in this debate is not halachic but deeply hashkafic. Many feel that the broader inclusion of women, and in particular religious women, in the army is part of a much broader battle between Torah values and modern philosophical movements, such as feminism, egalitarianism and post-modernism. Whilst Torah thought may engage in some ways with each of those philosophies⁴⁴, fundamentally they are often deeply opposed to key Torah values.

38. Proper sexual conduct and the negative impact of SDTs on military camps is also a relevant to the proper performance of the soldier in war.

39. Written in 1277 by R' Yitzchak of Corbeille, one of the Ba'alei haTosafot.

40. Although Bet uniform is also worn on base most of the time, even when not training, and the halachic justification for pants in those situations will decrease.

41. There is a parallel discussion concerning ski-pants, scrubs in hospital etc which is beyond the scope of this shiur.

42. A student of mine who enlisted in the IDF addressed this question to R. Yehuda Gilad, Rav of Kibbutz Lavi. His response was that if this woman was normally particular to wear skirts and not pants in civilian life, she should wear skirts for 'Alefs'.

43. The usual concern is that she will 'stick out' or 'look weird'. Whilst this is a real concern for people, it must be stressed that keeping halacha requires strength and pride, and a person must be prepared to do the right thing even when faced with those who mock or scorn - see Tur OC 1.

44. See in particular the writings of Rav Shalom Gershon Rosenberg - 'Rav Shagar'.

38. We love the army and value it tremendously ... We want to integrate as equals in all units. However, the IDF, led by the chief of staff's adviser on gender issues, is trying to re-educate us and to force us into a culture we are not accustomed to. And this we cannot accept. ... I believe in the army. I served in the army, including in the reserves, until the age of 59. All my children served in the IDF – all my boys in elite units. I believe in the army. And I tell you that in the past two years something terrible has occurred which is taking us backwards. We sat for many months ... and came up with a resolution called 'proper integration'. This was our final position... Now everything has been undone⁴⁵ and we have 'mixed service'. ... The danger is also for boys, but primarily for girls. I am not saying they should not enlist, but we must all fight vocally against this.

R. Yaakov Medan (March 2017) - <https://www.timesofisrael.com/liberal-orthodox-rabbis-ban-idf-service-in-mixed-combat-units/>⁴⁶

• Ultimately, the position of Religious Zionist leaders (with few exceptions, even on the liberal wing of the movement) is negative, or at least very concerned, about religious women enlisting into the IDF. Their real concerns are NOT the specific halachic issues that we have dealt with in these shiurim, but rather the overwhelming atmosphere of the army, which fills the minds and hearts of every soldier, almost to the exclusion of all other things. This atmosphere is extremely secular and its effect on the religious values and resolution of men and women is very significant. Even if they are able to maintain some level of religious strength throughout their service, the drip-drip effect of their army environment will mould their values and priorities for life after the army.⁴⁷

• Of course, there are women who are able to remain religiously strong in the army and even deepen their growth. This does not change the reality for the many who are not.⁴⁸

E] OTHER ISSUES

E1] MESIMA - ARMY SERVICE AS A TAFKID - OFFICIAL APPOINTMENT

39.

נוסף להאמור, לולא דמסתפינא, הייתי מציע דבר חידוש ע"פ האמור לעיל, שהמתגייס לצבא ומתקבל כחיל הלא הוא מתמנה לתפקיד מפורט ולדרגה מיוחדת, וע"פ כוחותיו והשיגיו עולה מדרגה לדרגה ומתפקיד לתפקיד, א"כ יש כאן עניין של „משימה” ה„מינוי”, וזה לאיש נאמר, משא"כ אשה שאינה בכלל מינוי, דאין ממנים בהם אלא איש (רמב"ם הל' מלכים פ"א ה"ה), דעליה נאמר „כל כבודה בת מלך פנימה”, כדביאר הרדב"ז (שם, פ"ו ה"ד), ואינה מכלל המתמנים לתפקידים מיוחדים אפילו במלחמת מצוה, ואינה בפלוגה וכיתה מיוחדת, כאיש שמתמנה לדרגות ופקודות שונות, וכהא דמצינו בקרא (ראה שמואל-א ח יב, וכן שם ב כג ח). וכדכתב הרמב"ם (הל' מלכים פ"ד ה"ה), „וכן כופה את הראויין להיות שרים וממנה אותם וכו'”. וכן משמעות הירושלמי (סנהדרין פ"א ה"ד), ואשה אינה בכל אלה, ואין דרכה לצאת ואסורה להתקבל בצבא ולהשתתף במערכות המלחמה.

הרב גדליה פלדר, תורה שבע"פ כג (1982) עמ' 120

Rav Gedaliah Felder⁴⁹ proposes a novel reason why women should not be assigned to army positions. He sees this as a potential infringement of the halacha not to appoint women to community positions.

40. שום תשים עלך מלך אשר יבחר ה' אלהיך בו מקרב אחיך

דברים י"טו

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

45. Rav Medan was battling against many of the changes imposed by the IDF, especially in combat roles, perceived by many as 'politically correct' mixing of genders. His issue here is not with women in the IDF in support and logistic roles.

46. This is of course a media story and a definitive view on Rav Medan's positions on such matters should only be taken from his own words. See for instance Rav Medan's article - עוקרים מבנות בכוח את תפקידיהן בבניין המשפחה - where he is very outspoken (in the face of political correctness!) again liberal agendas on women's issues. See <https://www.srugim.co.il/288251-%d7%a2%d7%95%d7%a7%d7%a8%d7%99%d7%9d-%d7%9e%d7%91%d7%a0%d7%95%d7%aa-%d7%91%d7%9b%d7%95%d7%97-%d7%90%d7%aa-%d7%aa%d7%a4%d7%a7%d7%99%d7%93%d7%99%d7%94%d7%9f-%d7%91%d7%91%d7%a0%d7%99%d7%99%d7%9f-%d7%94>

47. This is part of a bigger debate concerning why Religious Zionism is not able to hold so many of its youth in the longer term. A very high proportion of young people who grow up in strong Religious Zionist homes drift into a 'Dati Lite' reality which holds onto some religious and halachic observance, but in an overwhelmingly secular Israeli context. A smaller, but significant, proportion simply become 'Datashim' - dati lesheavar (formerly religious) which almost entirely breaks with many halachic norms. There is no question that this trend is exacerbated by intense army service in an secularized environment, exposure to modern philosophical positions such as post-modernism which rejects objective truth and undermines Rabbinic authority, and then three or more years in university where these secular values are deeply imbibed and strengthened. Army service will also deepen the resolve of many religious women to chose university and career options which they would never have considered before, eg dorming in secular college environments and chosing a career path which delays marriage and children. For a valuable analysis of the challenges faced by Religious Zionist women in the IDF, including extensive interviews with women in leaderships roles who support those young female soldiers - such as Rabbanit Michal Nagen, head of the pre-army mechina for women - Zahali - see the book - סרוגים בקנה - סיפור השתלבות הציונות הדתית בצה"ל, especially the chapter on women in the army - Seder Nashim (pp 129-148)

48. A totally separate question is how Sherut Leumi - non-military national service - is able to address the concerns outline above. It is certainly NOT a trouble-free solution to these problems.

49. Rabbi Felder (d.1991) was a halachic authority for many years in Canada. He was a supporter of Mizrahi and served as a dayan on the Beit Din of the RCA.

41. מלך, ולא מלכה

ספרי דברים פרשת שופטים פיסקא קנו

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

42. תנינא. (דברים ז) 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.

43. 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 ז

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.

44. 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 he extends the prohibition to appointing any women to 'mesima shebeyisrael' - Jewish public office.

- Although an army career is indeed a series of appointments of ever increasing authority over others, it is not clear that this would constitute a Jewish public office.
- Furthermore, the main challenge to this position is that the application of this halacha in the modern world is subject to debate and disagreement. In a society in which women (including observant Jewish women) serve as corporate, business and community leaders in many fields, increasing number of poskim have ruled like the Rishonim who do not follow this position of the Rambam and who do allow women in community leadership roles.⁵⁰
- The issue of women officers in the IDF is related and important.⁵¹ It presents both challenges, halachically⁵² and morally, but also opportunities.⁵³

- R. Shlomo Min HaHar⁵⁴ concludes not only that women are prohibited from drafting into the IDF but also that a woman who insists on doing so is in breach of the Torah mitzva לבב אחיו כלבו - weakening the morale and resolve of the other troops.
- Chilul Hashem/Kiddush Hashem - some poskim frame the failure of entire sectors of the Jewish community in Israel to join in the need to protect to the Yishuv as a massive abrogation of responsibility and Chilul Hashem of the most serious nature.⁵⁵
- Rav Shlomo Aviner⁵⁶, an leading strong Religious Zionist figure, and staunch opponent of women in the IDF, caused a major controversy by ruling that a religious man may not serve in a mixed unit in which there are women combat soldiers but must insist on a separate environment. If that is not possible, R. Aviner ruled that the young man may NOT go to the army, as this would be a 'mitzva haba'ah beaveira' due to the halachic prohibition on mixing.
- However, in fact, service in mixed units has been prohibited and severely criticized by even the more liberal wing of Orthodoxy in Israel. In 2017, a letter signed by 13 rabbis and a female head of a women's pre-military academy, banned religious soldiers from serving in combat units such as Caracal, a mixed-gender infantry battalion. The signatories included R. Shlomo Riskin, R. David Stav, R. Yaakov Medan and Rabbanit Michal Nagen, as well as the Beit Hillel organization.⁵⁷

50. Note that, until 2013 the United Synagogue in the UK did not permit women to be presidents of communities. Following a ruling of the London Beit Din in 2012 that this was not in breach of halacha, this position has changed and women are now elected as presidents of synagogue communities. My understanding is that the previous position of the LBD was based on the clear psak of the Rambam and many other Rishonim, but due to the changing circumstances of the community, they changed this psak to follow other authoritative opinions in the Rishonim which would allow this. See Igrot Moshe YD 2:45 where Rav Moshe Feinstein deals with the appointment a woman to run a kashrut hashgacha. He finds that, although many Rishonim do agree with the Rambam that this would be 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. For more analysis see <http://rabbimanning.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Women-Rabbis.pdf> and <http://rabbimanning.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Women-Rabbis.mp3>

51. See in particular *Halm Yechola Isha Lihiyot Me'akedet BeTzahal* - R. Avihud Schwartz, Techumin 32 p306. Rav Schwartz is a senior figure in the Rabbanut of the IDF.

52. R. Schwartz (ibid) gives an overview of the range of opinions which would prohibit and permit this. He expresses clear concerns that the tznit challenges of close mixing in the field are very significant and are likely to tip the scales of the halachic argument to a conclusion that women should not be permitted to take officer roles.

53. R. Schwartz observes that, as the drafting of religious women to the IDF increases, having women officers who are able to command these female soldiers could be a real benefit.

54. *Shituf Nashim BeMilchama*, Techumin 4 p.68.

55. See *Giyus Bano Veshert Leumi - Iyun Behalacha*, Yechezkel Cohen, HaKibutz HaDati

56. See *הרב שלמה אבינר / מחיל אל חיל / 8. נושאים הלכתיים / כו. גיוס בנות לצבא*. Rav Aviner is opposed to women in any role in the IDF.

57. See <https://www.timesofisrael.com/liberal-orthodox-rabbis-ban-idf-service-in-mixed-combat-units/>. The context was widespread criticism of R. Yigal Levinstein, head of the Eit pre-army Mechina, who was very critical of women in the IDF - see <https://www.timesofisrael.com/defense-minister-demands-rabbi-who-disparaged-female-troops-resign/>