REVIEW ESSAY ON BLU GREENBERG'S ON WOMEN AND JUDAISM: A VIEW FROM TRADITION

INTRODUCTION

As women become more interested in demonstrating their religious commitment, some sectors within the orthodox Jewish community continue to struggle with the feminist movement, attempting to incorporate feminist ideals into a religious life-style without violating the halakhah. In her book, On Women and Judaism: A View From Tradition, a compilation of some new material and previously published essays, Blu Greenberg illustrates how the goals of feminism may be applied to several areas of religious life. Since she cites halakhic sources, and is regarded by some as an orthodox feminist spokeswoman, the reforms that she calls for convey an air of halakhic authority and authenticity. Because of the centrality of halakhah in orthodox Jewish life, the focus of this review will be an analysis of the pertinent halakhic sources. This will include those sources that Greenberg cites to support her theses and, in addition, those that she fails to include. Most of the relevant halakhic issues discussed in Greenberg's book can be broadly categorized into halakhot that are specifically applicable only to women, and halakhot pertaining to women and liturgy. Accordingly, this review will center on these two areas in an attempt to determine whether the opinions presented can authentically be described as a view from tradition.

I

Greenberg examines the laws of niddah observance, gittin and abortion and calls for their reform in accordance with feminist ideology. With regard to niddah separation Greenberg maintains that the lengthy period of abstention now required is too difficult for
some people to observe and should therefore be reduced from the minimum 12 day separation to seven days. In order to substantiate her proposal for change in niddah observance she presents a historical development of the laws of niddah. Discussing the beneficial aspects of niddah observance, which, according to Greenberg is to safeguard the woman from becoming a sex object, she concludes with a statement from Niddah 31b:

Because a man may become overly familiar with his wife and thus repelled by her, the Torah said that she should be a niddah for seven clean days (emphasis added) [following menses] so that she will be as beloved [to him after niddah] as on the day of her marriage. (pp. 107-108).

A comparison with a more literal translation of this Talmudic statement reveals Greenberg’s unfamiliarity with certain fundamental details of this topic.

It was taught: R. Meir used to say, why did the Torah ordain that uncleanness of menstruation should continue for seven days? Because being in constant contact with his wife [a husband might] develop a loathing towards her. The Torah therefore ordained: Let her be unclean for seven days in order that she shall be beloved by her husband as at the time of her first entry into the bridal chamber. (Soncino Niddah 31b).

Greenberg fails to acknowledge R. Meir as the author of this statement which is crucial for its historical significance. There is no mention of seven “clean” days after the menses in R. Meir’s statement, nor would one expect it, for in R. Meir’s time the Biblical requirement of separation for a niddah was a unit of seven days, irrespective of the presence of blood. Greenberg inserts the phrase “clean” days which distorts the authentic statement. During R. Meir’s time seven “clean” days were Biblically mandated only for the zavah gedolah—one who flows beyond the Biblically prescribed seven days for a menstruant, or whose blood flow is considered to be non-menstrual.\(^1\) The blanket application of seven “clean” days to any blood flow is a later development which will be discussed further on.

Greenberg continues to insert phrases into texts, thus distorting the original meanings of the texts. She paraphrases a discussion in Shabbat 13a as follows:

The scholars ask: may a niddah sleep in bed with her husband, each fully clothed, thus avoiding bodily contact? Shammai answers in the affirmative—they may sleep together fully clothed, for sleeping together (during the “white” days) is not prohibited, only intercourse. Hillel disagrees—and the law is according to Hillel. (p. 113).
When comparing her paraphrase with a more literal translation we again note a number of discrepancies.

The scholars propounded: May a niddah sleep together with her husband, she in her garment and he in his? Said R. Joseph, Come and hear: A fowl may be served together with cheese at the (same) table, but not eaten (with it) this is Beth Shammai’s view. Beth Hillel ruled: It may neither be served nor eaten (together!). (Soncino Shabbat 13a).

Neither Beth Shammai nor Beth Hillel directly respond to the rabbis, but rather, their respective answers are merely inferred; neither Shammai nor Hillel are mentioned, rather the “schools” of Hillel and Shammai, which immediately obscures the dating of this passage. Most importantly, there is again no mention of seven “clean” days in this passage—the scholars’ question refers to the Biblical niddah of seven days. Any bleeding beyond the allotted seven days is classified as a zavah. Greenberg continues,

The discussion takes place after the minimum day count was increased from seven days (biblical) to twelve (five menses plus seven “whites”); initially, only intercourse was forbidden during the seven “whites”, but at some point in the rabbinic period, probably around the time of Hillel and Shammai (1st C. BCE), the biblical taboo against any and all forms of bodily contact during menses was carried over to the seven “whites” as well. (pp. 113-114)

Because of her assumption that Shabbat 13a refers to seven “clean” days, Greenberg mistakenly attributes the increase of separation from seven to twelve days, to the period before Shammai and Hillel, for only after this increase took place could the “taboos” of niddah be applied to the seven “clean” days, as well. The process and time period that Greenberg describes for the increase from seven to twelve days of separation is incorrect. There were actually a number of stages in the increase from the Biblically defined seven days for a menstruant to today’s observance of a minimum of twelve days of separation.

Until the time of Rabbi Judah ha-Nasi (c. 3rdc.CE), approximately 2–3 generations after R. Meir, menstruating women observed the Biblically required niddah period of seven days. However a woman whose blood flow was considered to be non-menstrual was classified as a zavah rather than a niddah. The Biblical requirement of separation for the zavah gedolah is the duration of the flow—a minimum of three days—followed by seven “clean” days free from the blood flow. Rabbi Judah ha-Nasi enacted a takanah that a woman who flows blood for a minimum of three days, regardless of the type of blood, must, upon the cessation of the flow, wait an additional seven “clean” days (Niddah 66a). Rabbi’s takanah levied
strictures on two aspects of the Biblical law of niddah. A woman who flowed for three days may have been in the middle of her niddah period and would Biblically have to observe only four more days of separation, regardless of the presence of blood. However, Rabbi increased the period of separation (for a minimum three-day blood flow) from seven to ten days and mandated that the seven subsequent days be completely free from blood.

The next stage in the halakhic development of niddah separation was initiated by women themselves.

The daughters of Israel have imposed upon themselves the restriction that even if they observe a drop of blood of the size of a mustard seed they wait on account of it seven clean days. (Soncino, Niddah 66a).

Any appearance of blood necessitated, upon its cessation, an additional seven “clean” days, thereby considering a woman with any type of blood flow, regardless of the three-day minimum of Rabbi Judah ha-Nasi, in the halakhic category of a zavah gedolah. A short time later R. Papa (300-375) established as halakhah this prevalent custom of women, and stated,

Consider: At the present tense the Rabbis have put all menstruants on the same level as zavahs. (Soncino Niddah 67b).

R. Papa indicates that for any blood a woman must consider herself a zavah gedolah and upon the cessation of the blood flow she must count seven “clean” days. Throughout this period there was no five-day minimum requirement prior to the counting of the seven “clean” days. The codification of this minimum five days is a later development.²

In light of the above it is obvious that the sugya in Shabbat 13a is not referring to the seven “white” days nor is R. Meir referring to “white” days either. Because of her invalid interpolation of seven “clean” days into texts her historical-halakhic analysis which followed, based on her interpolation, is incorrect as well. It is ironic that the self-imposed stricture of women to require seven “clean” days for any drop of blood is only alluded to once in the book (p. 66). Considering Greenberg’s call for women to participate in the halakhic process, her exclusion of this female-initiated halakhic stringency begs for an explanation.

Greenberg proposes “modest” reforms in niddah observance because,
almost half a month is too difficult to sustain . . . many more Jewish couples seriously may consider the observance of niddah were it limited to the seven-day period prescribed by biblical law. (p. 121).

Even if Greenberg had presented a correct historical analysis of niddah laws this proposal would be unacceptable to the orthodox community. In actuality, she is suggesting that the Rabbinic development of halakhah be ignored and the practice revert to the seven-day period prescribed by Biblical law, thus erasing the subsequent seven “clean” days. This can hardly be considered a view from tradition. In addition to ignoring Rabbinic development, by advocating such a proposal, Greenberg also erases the Biblical law of zavah which clearly states that upon the cessation of a blood flow a woman must observe seven “clean” days. Since we no longer are able to distinguish between niddah and zavah blood a woman may, according to Greenberg, observe a separation of seven days followed by proper immersion and a resumption of marital relations, when in fact she may have been a Biblical zavah necessitating seven “clean” days after the flow. The gravity of this situation is evident.

II

Greenberg calls for change in the halakhic procedure of divorce to enable the woman to initiate and deliver a get. Whereas in her historical development of the niddah laws Greenberg proposes a reversion to the Biblical law in order to simplify niddah observance, in her treatment of divorce law she proposes a more radical modification of Biblical law.

Perhaps the male prerogative—man giving the get to woman—is but form and not essence. Perhaps it was an accident of history that a pervasive notion of hierarchy of the sexes enabled procedure to be hardened into principle, thereby blocking out other more important principles, such as tikkun olam, improvement of the social order, equality for all members of the covenanted community (p. 143).

Greenberg claims that the verse of ve-katav lah sefer keritut venatan beyadah (Deut. 24:1) merely indicates form—social reality—and not essence—the fundamental principle. But, halakhah maintains that the verse is indeed “essence” of the divorce procedure. Greenberg’s willingness to attribute the Biblical command of ve-katav lah ve-natan beyadah—from which halakhah requires the man to deliver the get—to “an accident of history”—forces one to question her claims of a traditional perspective. In addition revolutionizing halakhic procedure is based only on a “perhaps,” even from her point of view.
An additional problem which is present here, as well as in other topics she discusses, is her oversimplification and extension of halakhic principles, regardless of their relevancy. Although tikku olam may at times be invoked as a basis for certain halakhic decisions, her proposal is too radical to be based on vague and amorphous categories of "improvement of the social order, equality for all members of the covenantal community."

In her discussion of divorce law Greenberg redefines the intent of the Biblical verse addressing divorce procedure and proceeds to employ selected broad and unrelated principles to substantiate her thesis. She continues this process in her provocative discussion of abortion when she glosses over the halakhic parameters of "threat to life" and invokes broad principles which she must redefine in order to substantiate her thesis.

Greenberg quotes Oholot 7:6:

If a woman is having hard labor and her life is in danger, the fetus may be cut up and extracted limb by limb, for her life takes precedence over that of the fetus. But if the greater part of the fetus has already been born one may not touch it for the life of one person may not be taken for that of another.

She generalizes that until birth the fetus is not considered a human life and concludes that halakhah does not view abortion as murder. However, she ignores the pivotal halakhic criterion of the mishnah—the threat to life—and because she omits this fact she may then suggest that...

...since there are no traditional Jewish precedents for abortion on demand one way to maintain some integrity within the halakhic framework could be to broaden the interpretation of therapeutic abortion. (p. 150).

In spite of her acknowledgement that "there are no traditional Jewish precedents for abortion on demand," she continues to propose that abortion on demand be legitimized as an extension of therapeutic abortion. When proposing such major halakhic change as the legitimization of abortion on demand it is mandatory to carefully analyze the halakhic categories involved. It is therefore misleading to correlate abortion on demand with therapeutic abortion without first determining whether abortion on demand could ever possibly be considered an extension of a "threat to life."

Greenberg offers additional principles on which she bases broadening the limits on abortion.

The principle of ve-hai bahem ("and you shall live by them," the mitzvot, that is (Lev. 18:5)) could be applied to the abortion of a Tay-Sachs or de-
formed fetus. Here the dignity of *tselem elo kim* must be interpreted not as opposing abortion lest it lead to dehumanization but rather in the light of the suffering and the inevitable death that will ensue. (p. 152).

In actuality Greenberg recasts the intent of *ve-hai bahem* and *tselem elo kim* by considering the dignity of *tselem elo kim* and the eventual suffering as a determining factor and, by viewing *ve-hai bahem* as a right to determine quality of life rather than an obligation to live. Aware, however, of the limited applicability of the broad principle—*ve-hai bahem*—she states briefly, though only in a note,

> ... that mitzvot were commanded for people to live by and not to die by. Classically this Biblical phrase has had a limited legal application ... (p. 155).

As in her discussion of divorce law, Greenberg again bases major change on broad and unrelated principles and redefines them, thus modifying their original intent.

### III

Any discussion of women and halakhah must address the fundamental issue of women's exemption from time-bound mitzvot (*mitsvot aseh she-hazeman gerama nashim paturot*). In her cursory discussion of the principle of exemption, Greenberg states:

> Is there any way that the release of women from the obligation to study Torah, or praying at the prescribed times, can be understood in the sense of kedushah, holiness, a "setting aside?" ... I find it hard to accept any notion that assigns to God a plan for hierarchy of the sexes: role division, yes to some extent; but superiority, no that could only be a time-bound human interpretation of God's will, from which women ought now to be exempt. If the male-female stratification is sociological rather than theological, are we bound to it forever? Does the fact that this long-standing sociological truth has been codified into Halakhah oblige us to make an external principle out of an accident of history? (pp. 45-46).

The basis of Greenberg's thesis is an emotional and subjective argument which makes unfounded assumptions about God. Since she cannot imagine, or does not want to believe that God would endorse a limiting exemption principle, she attributes it to time-bound human interpretation. Being more sensitive today to God's true will, she renders the exemption principle invalid, thus obligating women to perform duties from which they were previously exempt. However, she ignores the possibility that the basis for time-bound
mitsvot is prescriptive for a certain life-style rather than descriptive of an existing society. Furthermore, she blurs the distinction between the statement of principle *mitsvot aseh she-hazeman gerama* and the rationale for the principle (e.g. involved with family), and assumes their interchangeability, despite the fact that the authority of a principle is valid though the reason which was subsequently attributed to it may change. Acknowledging that we do not find a rationale for the exemption principle in the Talmud, she continues to question the principle since, “it is a standard called into question by contemporary notions of sexual equality” (p. 83). She oversteps the boundary of the traditional halakhic framework by advocating that one may subject principles to contemporary notions of behavior, and absurdly extends this even to a case—such as ours—where the rationale for the principle was not even articulated.

Having invalidated the exemption principle based on an emotional argument, Greenberg proceeds to substantiate her opposition based on halakhic sources. She seeks support in a Talmudic statement by R. Johanan for her claim that the exemption principle, in particular, its arbitrary nature is inappropriate. The Talmud (*Kiddushin* 34a) enumerates examples of positive time-bound and non time-bound mitsvot and questions whether the statement of exemption from time-bound mitsvot is a working principle to be extended and applied to mitsvot not specifically listed in the mishnah.

R. Johanan responds,

> We cannot learn from general principles, even when exceptions are stated. (Sonc. Trans.).

Greenberg’s translation must be noted. It appears in quotation marks as follows:

> Even though the Mishnah has already stated general exceptions to the principle, that list was not exhaustive, other exceptions have been or could be added (*Kiddushin* 34a p. 83).

This translation is inaccurate and incorporates statements in the name of R. Johanan not found in the text. R. Johanan indicates that the individual cases (particulars) precede a formulated principle and are therefore well defined. Since these particulars establish the principle they are closed to emendation. However, Greenberg’s understanding of R. Johanan maintains the fluidity of the principle and the particulars. This, based on her own interpolation of “other exceptions have been or could be added,” which then becomes the basis for Greenberg’s thesis of exempting women from the exemp-
tion principle, thereby obligating them in the performance of time-bound mitsvot. Whereas R. Johanan, in effect, conserves the particulars of the principle, Greenberg attempts to reform them. She then paraphrases R. Johanan's statement as, "the principle is not necessarily consistent." Contextually, R. Johanan is not commenting on the essential meaning of the exemption principle but rather is concerned with the implications of the seemingly all-inclusive language of "general principles" (Kelalim).³ The exemption principle is stated in the Mishnah as,

All affirmative precepts limited to time, men are liable and women are exempt.

But all affirmative precepts not limited to time are binding upon both men and women. (Kiddushin 29a).

and R. Johanan merely remarks that one cannot view a general statement even when introduced by "all" (kol), as an all-encompassing principle from which additional particulars may be derived. Instead, a general principle is a statement formulated to express the common denominator of the particulars hitherto expressed. To be sure, this general principle is not completely representative of all positive time-bound mitsvot, but for R. Johanan the principle is valid considering the majority of the cases. Greenberg's understanding of R. Johanan's statement is superficial and if taken to its logical conclusion she must conclude that there is no value and function for the general principle of exemption.⁴ In fact, she actually alludes to this as she continues,

. . . the principle is not necessarily consistent, for those so inclined to interpret it that way, R. Johanan's statement opens the door to historical emendation of particulars that flow in and out of the principle—which is, in fact, what has happened. (p. 83).

It is neither a fair presentation, nor is it intellectually sound, to suggest an interpretation followed by "for those so inclined to interpret it that way." She permits herself to extrapolate that an inconsistent principle—one which does not completely represent its particulars—becomes a principle which allows for particulars to flow in and out of it. In addition, she does not cite any examples to illustrate which mitsvot have changed their status of obligation. Her note refers the reader to a discussion of women optionally performing mitsvot from which they are exempt and if this is her only basis she fails to realize that voluntary observance of these mitsvot does not abrogate the principle of exemption.
Greenberg offers an alternate principle for women’s exemption. She proposes that a mother tending to family needs ought to be included in the purview of “one engaged in a religious duty is exempt from other religious obligations” (Sukkah 25a). Although she previously stated that we do not find a rationale for the exemption principle in the Talmud, she now calls for halakhic reform on the assumption that child rearing is the basis for women’s exemption. Therefore, when a woman is preoccupied with children she is exempt from certain religious obligations until her children reach an age when they no longer require constant care. Although this is an interesting proposition, she overextends a defined halakhic principle, ha-osek be-mitsvah patur min ha-mitsvah, which is limited to very specific religious activities. She bases halakhic change on an unfounded relationship between the exemption of women from time-bound mitsvot and the exemption of “ha-osek be-mitsvah.”

One of the issues which must be addressed in a discussion of women and Judaism is their participation in liturgical rites. Women, slaves and children are exempt (Kiddushin 1:7). The correct source is Berakhot 3:3 rather than Kiddushin 1:7 and the mishnah in context continues, “from reciting the Shema and from Tefillin but are obligated in tefilah, mezuzah and grace”.

Greenberg claims that the language of the principle itself has by association perpetuated a negative self-image. She asserts that this phraseology subtly suggests that halakhah perceives women as sharing the same status as slaves and children and the resulting impact has weakened women’s commitment to prayer.

A liturgical example of this male chauvinism is evident, according to Greenberg, in the blessing recited each morning by men, thanking God for not having been created a woman:

Several decisions placed women in the same category as minors and slaves, the principal difference being that the latter two could grow up and out of their ascribed limitations. It was not without good reason that every morning a male would recite the benediction, Blessed be God . . . for not having created me a women . . . a slave . . . a gentile. No one for a moment challenged the appropriateness of those daily morning blessings (p. 64).

Unqualified, the above statement conveys a very negative tone and Greenberg does not elaborate further. However, in a note she comments,

The blessing is attributed to R. Meir in Menachot 34b; it is also found in Tosephta Berakhot 6:23 in a more original form. In both of these sources a
legal rather than a social reason is given: Blessed be God . . . for not having created me a woman because woman is not obligated to fulfill the commandments as tefillin . . . tzizit—all of which continually remind him of God's presence. (p. 71).

Had Greenberg included the legal rationale for the blessing, as stated in the talmudic sources, in the text of her discussion rather than in a note, the emphasis would have certainly shifted from a negative, discriminatory tone to one of halakhic fact regarding obligation in mitsvot.

Greenberg further claims that the term patur, "...summons up a primal obligation of all Israel with women subsequently exempt" (p. 90). Her notion of primal obligation is not inherent in the literal reading of the text. Furthermore, she must conclude that because of her previous claim of an intrinsic connection between women, slaves and children, the language of patur also indicates a primal obligation for slaves and children as well! However, based on her unsubstantiated notion of primal obligation Greenberg asserts,

The halakhic obligation of women in public prayer should be instated or reinstated as the historical case may be. (p. 92).

She claims that the obligation of public prayer would reinforce steady prayer amongst Jewish women. Considering that many halakhic sources obligate women to pray twice or thrice daily, it seems superfluous to suggest that women be obligated in public prayer in order to insure that they fulfill their primal halakhic obligation to pray. If the commitment to private prayer is lacking, the difficulties of public prayer thrice daily will not promote its observance. Greenberg's statement that "public prayer should be instated" assumes that women were not previously obligated in public prayer. Greenberg also subtly suggests that women, at some point in history, may indeed have been obligated in public prayer—"halakhic obligation of women in public prayer should be instated or reinstated (p. 92)." She bases herself on Phillip Sigal's conclusions in his article, "Women in a Prayer Quorum," which contributed to the Conservative movement's decision to allow for the inclusion of women in a minyan. Sigal claims that Berakhot 3:3 (women are exempt from reciting the Shema . . . but obligated in tefillah) obligates women in public prayer. There is no evidence that tefillah is used to refer to public prayer rather than prayer in general, or the silent amidah, in particular. Sigal redefines tefillah without basis and Greenberg concurs with his position, thereby calling for the reinstition of the obligation of women in public prayer. Greenberg is not willing to take the final leap and obligate men and women
equally in public prayer; rather prayer in a minyan is "urgently preferable." She defines "urgently preferable" as a status in which public prayer is not mandatory, so that women are not forced out to attend minyan, but if they attend they ought to have equal standing. Greenberg does not address the problem of unequal obligation as stated in Mishnah Rosh Ha-Shanah 3:8,

This is the general principle: one who is not himself under obligation to perform a religious duty cannot perform it on behalf of a congregation.

She calls for rights associated with obligations but does not want the responsibilities. A person who is obligated in certain responsibilities may participate in the accompanying rights; one who is exempt from these obligations is not entitled to these rights.

Women’s obligation in grace after meals and the zimmun that often accompanies it is for Greenberg another example of a male chauvinistic attitude which expressed itself in the arbitrary nature of Rabbinic exegesis and resulted in interpreting women out of certain obligations.

The Torah tells us, “and you shall eat and be satisfied and bless God” (Deut. 8:10). It does not distinguish anywhere between male and female in that commandment. The rabbis, however, determined that the grace obligation for women is not a commandment from the Torah but rabbinic in origin. (pp. 98-99).

However, the issue of the type of obligation incumbent upon women to recite the grace is much more complex than Greenberg indicates. In actuality there are three schools of thought: those who maintain that a woman has a Torah obligation to say grace, those who claim that there is a doubt in the outcome of the talmudic deliberations, hence, a woman has a questionable Torah obligation, and others who assert that the obligation is Rabbinic. Each opinion is based on a number of basic sources and critical issues, which Greenberg fails to cite, even in a note. Conspicuously lacking is the second half of verse Deut. 8:10 from which the distinction between male and female obligation is derived. Her inadequate and incomplete treatment of the topic results in sweeping statements which do not afford an impartial presentation of the issue at hand.

CONCLUSION

The difficulties encountered in approaching the topic of women and Judaism reflect a far greater issue of an attempt to reconcile halakhah with the present-day philosophy of individuality and self-
expression. However, even before this can take place we must first examine and deal with how men and women perceive themselves and each other, for at some point in history the notion of separate (different) but equal began to connote a hierarchical rather than egalitarian system. Until the Jewish community confirms the equal intelligence capabilities of men and women alike, and affirms that exemption from certain obligations does not indicate inferiority or incapability of reason, but rather difference in function, obligating women in mitsvot previously exempted from will be meaningless.

In spite of the many problems with Greenberg's presentation, some of the sensitive issues she raises remain valid and her book serves to emphasize that one must approach this topic with extreme care and faithfulness to the texts. There is indeed both room and need for enabling committed women to ritually express their commitment. However, it must be done within a halakhic framework. To be sure, some halakhot cannot change without damaging the system as a whole. Therefore, instead of confronting halakhah in toto we ought to concentrate our energies on those mitsvot in which women's participation was fundamentally permitted rather than those which assumed their exemption. Bitterness, sarcasm and a distrust of Rabbinic figures and halakhic development is hardly the means to evoke change. Rather, sincerity of goals and consistent commitment regardless of the difficulties encountered will prove that women's desires to express their religious commitment are more than a passing fad.

NOTES

1. Leviticus 15:19, 25, 28 and commentaries ad.loc.
2. See for example Commentary on R. Jonah of Rif Berakhot 31a; Commentaries to Shulhan Arukh Yoreh De'ah ch. 196:11.
3. See Erubin 26b-27a where R. Johanan's statement appears, again commenting on the all inclusive statement in the mishnah, "With all may erub and shittuf be effected . . .
4. Regarding validity of keltalim see for example Rosh, Shevuot 6:5
5. Greenberg, pp. 8, 91. According to Greenberg women would be obligated in all mitsvot prior to having children, then subsequently exempt for a limited period of time and then obligation is reconfirmed. The arbitrary nature of this proposal is obvious—what age defines a child who no longer needs constant care. The conflicts engendered within a woman between caring for family and her desire to fulfill her religious obligations must also be evaluated.
6. See Mishnah Berurah Orah Hayyim 106:1:4. Even though technically women should be exempt (for it is time fixed) they are nonetheless obligated to say shaharit and minhah. See also Arukh Ha Shulhan, Orah Hayyim 106:7, "It is difficult to justify that our women are not careful in all three tefilot according to the explanations of Rashi and Tosaphot, though according to Rif and Rambam they are acting appropriately."
7. Philip Sigal, "Women in a Prayer Quorum," in *Conservative Judaism and Jewish Law*, ed. S. Siegal. (Rabbinical Assembly, N.Y. 1977). The editor notes, . . . the author's response on this question was instrumental in a vote being taken by the Rabbinical Law Committee on August 29, 1973 (after preparation of this article) to approve formally the inclusion of women in a minyan. (p. 283).

8. See for example Rif on *Berakhot* 3:3 and commentaries *ad. loc.*
