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***WOMEN IN THE TORAH WORLD IN THE THOUGHT OF***

***RABBI AHARON LICHTENSTEIN***

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In writing about the approach of my father, Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein *zt”l*, to the role of women in the Torah world, I understand my readers will be interested in gaining not only an intellectual assessment but also one that incorporates a personal, existential perspective. I believe that my father sounded a unique voice with regard to the incorporation of women into the world of Torah, and his actions have had an impact upon thousands of women.

What is the worldview that underlies his opinions and actions in this realm? I will seek to present both his positions and their underlying foundations, along with his understanding of women’s spiritual world.

At the outset, I wish to distinguish between my father’s approach to Torah for women vis-à-vis the study of Torah as opposed to other realms of divine service, both personal and communal. I believe that there were significant discrepancies in his approach regarding these two areas. Yet, I would like to show that there are joint underlying and guiding principles to both.

***Torah Study***

My father invested great efforts in opening the doors to the world of Torah for me and for many other women. He saw this as his obligation as a father and as a rabbi and teacher, and he transmitted this sense of duty to us as well. While he expected a different intensity, and set different standards, for boys and for girls, he had very high expectations, provided guidance, and dedicated significant resources to create serious Torah study opportunities and experiences for girls and women. My father learned with each of his children every Shabbat when we were growing up, he bought us *sefarim*, and he was always responsive to any request for joint learning in adulthood. In a dedication that he inscribed in a book, he wrote to me, “With hope and prayer that you will merit to understand and discern, listen, learn and teach, and to observe, perform and fulfill.” He surely had very high hopes, and he also always demonstrated his willingness to invest time, energy, and guidance.

Beyond his paternal voice, my father’s communal voice with regard to the issue of teaching Torah to women was loud, clear, and exceptional. One can say with near certainty that from the entire spectrum of rabbis who are considered to be supportive of teaching Torah to women, my father was among the few who supported teaching Gemara *be-iyyun* (intensively) independent of a focus upon practical halakha. For an article published in 1980, he was asked how much Torah should be taught to women. His response was: “To my mind it is desirable and necessary, not only possible, to provide intensive education for women even from Torah *she-be’al peh* sources.”1

He establishes this claim with a traditional rationale: developing the strength of one’s faith, knowledge of halakha and transmitting the *mesora* to the future generations. These explanations themselves are not novel. The difference between them and those provided by other rabbis lies in the quantitative question which translates into a qualitative one: what is necessary for a Jewish girl to learn in order to achieve these aims? My father believed that studying the *Kitzur Shulhan Arukh* and the *Kuzari* alone do not address these needs for a girl:

In my opinion, what is necessary in order for women to be adequately prepared from a Torah perspective for practical living is far more than what she is being taught today. Torah education for women must be strengthened, both quantitatively as well as qualitatively, including the teaching of all aspects of Torah.2

My father also raised the expectations for what we should consider qualified female educators. He was unwilling to suffice with teachers possessing merely an elementary knowledge of halakha. Rather, he sought educators with deeper bonds to all areas of Torah:

The woman who is to serve as the educator of the coming generation needs something to pass on, and therefore she needs the knowledge as well as a personal commitment to encourage the transmission of tradition. For this purpose it is desirable that the learning be intensified, because in this way she deepens her own commitment, her sense of responsibility. When something is well learned, it creates personal commitment. There are things that can be known in a general way, but they are not felt existentially, and therefore they do not penetrate one’s consciousness. For example, one should learn the mitzvot that are dependent upon the land of Israel. A woman ought to know, from a practical point of view, how to tithe *trumot* and *maasrot*. But one should not be satisfied with this. The same revulsion felt when confronted with eating pork should be elicited by the thought of eating *tevel* [untithed produce], and this is not presently the case. The prohibition against consuming *tevel Mid’Oraita* is more stringent a transgression than eating pork, yet there isn’t a comparable revulsion. Why? A lack of knowledge. Simply, these laws were not properly studied and, therefore, a deep impression has been made neither on the intellect nor on the soul. Therefore, the study of *Torah She’b’al Peh* must be intensified.3

In conclusion, he suggests incorporating Gemara study as an integral component of the curriculum in girls’ elementary and high schools, recommending that the students gain familiarity across much of the Talmudic range: *Zera’im*, *Mo’ed*, *Nezikin*, and parts of *Nashim*, *Kodashim* and *Taharot*. And he adds: “And when these areas are taught, they must be taught in depth.”

This position was nearly solitary, and surely exceptional, in its time. Many times, he expressed his displeasure with the curricular subject taught to girls known as “*Toshba*” (an acronym for *Torah she-be’al peh*, Oral Law), in which he sensed the artificiality, and perhaps even its exclusionary implication. In *Mevakshei Fanekha* (published in English as *Seeking His Presence*), my father addressed the discrepancy between the teaching of Mishna to boys which begins in second grade and the instruction to girls which commences in sixth grade. Along with that, he addressed the curricular implications of the course material often taught to girls as *Toshba*:

I have spent the last thirty-five years at various Torah institutions. One can study Bava Kamma or Bava Metzia, but I have never heard of a subject called “Oral Law,” as I see in your girls’ classes. What is this supposed to mean? If you are studying Bava Kamma or Bava Metzia, you are holding a book in your hands with clear letters and you are sitting and learning. Studying “Oral Law” is an amorphous, undefined subject, with no known starting point and no known destination.4

I think that what bothered my father is the fact that *Toshba* studies assume a “visit” or “casual familiarity” with the world of Torah, rather than allowing for true immersion into authentic Torah study. He sought to bring women into that world in the same way that he himself experienced it. My father was unenthusiastic about the attempt to develop an alternate mode of learning for women. He pursued the theory and practice that women should be engaged in Torah learning as it has been classically transmitted through the *mesora* of thousands of years, from generation to generation, with a recognition of the tools of study and thought, the basic concepts and knowledge that would facilitate “swimming” in the sea of Talmud.

My father attributed great importance to women’s responsibility as mothers and their role in raising children, and believed that, indeed, there is a difference between the roles of men and women. Yet, with regard to the manner in which one is to develop spiritually, to come close to God, in his opinion there is no fundamental difference between the genders. The father and the son, as well as the mother and the daughter, should take part in the same Torah world, just as women are obligated to ascend to Jerusalem for the *hakhel* assembly following the *shemitta* year (Deut. 31:12):

Assemble the people, the men, the women and the young children, as well as the aliens within your gates, in order that they shall hear, and so that they shall learn and so that they shall fear the Lord your God and they shall take care to fulfill all the words of this Torah.

The Talmud’s sentiment is well known: “The men, in order to learn. The women, in order to listen. And the young children, why do they come? So that a reward should be given to those who bring them” (Hagiga 3a, cited by Rashi, *ad loc*.). According to the Gemara, there is a discrepancy between the mission, destiny, and apparently also the spiritual needs of men and women. My father was quite fond of Ramban’s explanation (*ad loc.*), which parses the verse differently: “That they may hear, and that they may learn: [refers to] the men and the women, since [the women] also hear and learn to fear God.” On this interpretation, the *mitzva* of *hakhel* is identical for men and women both in its purpose, the fear of God, and in its means, to hear and to learn.

The weekly *shiur* that my father delivered in the early 2000s at the Migdal Oz seminary to a group of young women who had some training in Gemara learning differed from the shiur he delivered at Yeshivat Har Etzion both in its intensity and in the time that his male students spent preparing for it, but it was basically the same *shiur*. When he agreed to teach the *shiur* at Migdal Oz, the condition was that it would be on the same tractate that he was teaching at Yeshiva University’s Gruss Institute in Jerusalem. The sources (*mareh mekomot*) and the structure of the *shiur* were identical at the two institutions, out of a belief that “it is Torah, and it should be taught properly.”

Up to this point, I have presented a quantitative discrepancy, with a qualitative consequence, between my father’s approach and that of his predecessors, starting with the *Hafetz Hayim*, known for his support of Beit Yaakov, and up to Rabbi Yehudah Copperman of the Michlalah in Jerusalem, a school at which, my father would muse, it was prohibited to teach Gemara, but where every Rashi on *Parashat Mishpatim* (based primarily on *Gemarot*) was studied in depth.

I would now like to suggest that, in addition to advocating greater and more intensive Torah study for women than did his predecessors, my father also advocated it for substantially different reasons. In this regard, the novelty lies not merely in the content but in the motivation. Others were often moved to teach Torah to women so they “turn from evil.” That is, they were motivated primarily by “defensive” reasons, seeing the situation as an unfortunate one with no alternatives. My father, on the other hand, enthusiastically and optimistically advocated the study of Torah not principally as an antidote, but as a force for personal development and growth in the service of God—for both men and women. In an address he delivered at the dedication of the Ma’ayanot Yeshiva High School for Girls in Teaneck, NJ, he addressed the verse, “What does the Lord your God demand of you” (Deut. 10:12–13):

Now that this demand is one which is posited equally to men and to women—“And now Israel”: The community as a whole, each and every individual, male or female, within that community. And this is the primary goal of education, certainly Torah education…. “To fear [God], to love [God], to serve [God], to cling [to Him] to go in all His ways.” What are the means? Traditionally, over the centuries, there has been a fairly sharp dichotomy precisely regarding this very issue, namely the means to be employed in relation to men versus women, even as the same goals of “And now Israel” were known to be addressed to men and to women alike. Intensive study was central and crucial with respect to *bahurim*, with respect to men, while with regard to women, with regard to whom it was assumed, the emphases were to be different, perhaps the balance between Torah and *hesed* should be different, that aspect of intensive study was very often regarded to be different.5

The significance of this statement is profound. A woman must learn Torah in order to fulfill her destiny in this world. Even before caring for others every Jew has an obligation “to fear God, to follow in His paths, to love Him and to serve Him with all of your heart and with all of your soul.” My father believed that the path of a woman to achieve this status must also pass through learning. Foregoing serious, significant learning negatively impacts upon the most basic religious obligations which are incumbent upon a woman: fear, love, and service of God. Here, too, the study is meant to serve another purpose, for alongside her definition as a mother and an educator, she stands on her own before God, and must build up her religious personality as such.

With regard to these matters, my father came out against the accepted approach both in the Haredi and in the Religious-Zionist communities, which claim that the means to develop the religious personality of a girl is fundamentally different from that of a boy. Even without addressing the existing discrepancies between my father and other groups, with regard to the desired goals of women’s education, even if joint goals could be found, there is a question about the means. My father could not understand how one could develop a personality, based on love and fear of God, with no foundation in the world of Torah: one who cannot distinguish between *tevel* and *demai*, who does not know the minimal height of a *sukka*, or what a *karmelit* is. Service of God is not built entirely upon emotion and belonging. My father believed that this distinction between the male and female approaches to personality development was incorrect and patronizing. In conversations between us he complained numerous times: Those rabbis or heads of institutions who set up their curricula for girls based purely on Jewish thought and *musar*—would they want their own spiritual worlds to be constricted to those fields of study?

My father’s positive view of a woman’s obligation in Torah study grew out of his profound faith in the very purpose of learning. This idea was sharpened in the aforementioned lecture at Ma’ayanot:

*Talmud* Torah for women, particularly, although broadly speaking for men as well, is a process of bonding. Bonding with who and bonding with what? At one level, of course, with Torah. Developing not only the knowledge but an existential link not only in one’s head, but with every fiber of one’s being, to feel connected to Torah, to be sensitive, to be appreciative, to understand its worth and appreciate its centrality. That is something, which, again, perhaps at one time was attained by other means, but which today requires, to a great extent, direct confrontation, direct involvement with Torah proper…. What we need to bear in mind, practically speaking, is that this process of bonding, so critical, so crucial to the molding of our daughters as servants of the *Ribbono Shel Olam*, requires that their learning be not only comprehensive, but above all serious. Learning must be approached seriously. The halakhic basis for this seriousness is the *pasuk* in *Va-Ethannan* (Deuteronomy 4:9): “Take care, guard your soul very much, lest you forget anything of what your eyes have seen and lest these somehow escape from your heart.”

My father’s innovation here was in pointing to a woman’s obligation to remember the revelation at Sinai and its fulfillment via intense and profound Torah study.

I believe that his worldview, as I have described it, was inspired by two sources. One was his mother, Mrs. Bluma Lichtenstein *a”h*. She grew up in Lithuania among Torah giants, benefited from the world of learning and its creativity as a child, and in her youth even published articles in Torah periodicals. The time and place in which she was raised did not enable her to develop in this fi eld beyond teaching at the high school level, but there is no doubt as to the significance Torah study played in her life, and he saw in her a model of how learning could and should shape a woman’s religious personality. The second significant impact on my father’s worldview was that of my grandfather, Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik *zt”l*. The Rav believed in Torah study for women as an indispensable part of their religious world, and invested much effort, both in teaching Gemara to his own daughters at a high level, and at public fora by making the *Teshuva* lectures and *Yahrzeit Shiurim* open to women, designing the curriculum at the Maimonides School, and in delivering the first Gemara lecture at Stern College for Women, in which he lent all of his *gravitas* to the women’s branch of Yeshiva University. The Rav saw importance in teaching Torah to women and in educating women to take a part in learning as the central task of a Jew.

***Mitzva Performance***

My father’s perspective on the similarity of the respective spiritual needs of women and men in the world of mitzva practice stemmed from his understanding of “*tzelem Elokim*” (the image of God), combined with a deep belief that Torah and *mitzvot* should shape our lives. As such, he believed that one should encourage women to take part in all relevant *mitzvot* as individuals and communally. And indeed, as a parent, this was the educational line that my father followed: He encouraged us when it came to prayer and to other time-bound *mitzvot* such as *sukka* and *lulav*, just as he encouraged us to adopt stringent positions with regard to prohibitions such as carrying on Shabbat or chewing gum that contained gelatin. Yet—and herein lies the difference from women engaging in maximal Torah study—the picture is much more complex regarding ritual performance. There is a need to address the issue of time-bound *mitzvot*, as well as those that take place in the synagogue and in the public sphere, as well as other *mitzvot* that are unique to men even today, such as *tzitzit* and *tefillin*.

At first glance, while in the world of learning my father stood as a pioneer at the head of the camp, in the present regard he was more conservative and traditional. He did not support women’s Torah reading or women’s *tefilla* groups, he discouraged women from reading the *ketuba* at weddings, and did not even support women delivering a sermon in synagogue during services. Yet, unlike some voices that are heard elsewhere, one did not hear from my father, either orally or in writing, the notion that women’s desire for change is motivated by improper motives such as personal gain or power-seeking feminism. Absent evidence to the contrary he assumed that women advocating for an expanded roles in mitzva observance were sincerely motivated by the love and fear of heaven, even in cases where he could not support their initiatives. He observed in 2008:

On a practical level, many of the arguments today surround the matter of the synagogue…. The requests that arise are such that they are understandable in terms of the aspiration that they reflect. As with the request of those defiled by a corpse, who turned to Moses after the Paschal offering was made, asking, “Why should we be excluded?” (Num. 9:7) These women ask: why can we not read from the Torah or lead the services? Such a request, so long as it is stems from a personality of faith or a desire to serve God, can be understood and respected.6

And as such, this is also the way that he related to the women and their claims, and how they should be accepted:

I maintain that a rabbi needs to ask himself, or at least try to imagine, how matters appear from the other side of the *mehitza* (divider). He should gird himself with the appropriate sensitivity to the claims that are raised, and not automatically dismiss every claim, presenting the woman as if she is rebellious or heretical. Some of these matters are expressed out of pain, along with acceptance of authority.7

Today, there are two types of impediments to women’s increased participation in the public religious domain: substantive-halakhic and technical. Allow me to exemplify from the synagogue realm. Two elements exclude women from the synagogue: one is the substantive fact that women are unable to lead the services, and the second is the technical impediment that the women’s section is generally locked (and perhaps the air conditioner is noisy there, or perhaps there are no *siddurim* there, etc.). One could argue that we should not address trifles such as this latter issue, but rather focus instead on the former. However, as a woman, I do not downplay the second component. My usual audience is female, and the message I deliver is that the technical impediments are not a “heavenly decree,” and in our world, women need to demand the removal of all logistical barriers which prevent our engagement in synagogue life. It is not as simple as it sounds to initiate a more active presence for women in the synagogue, which would then demand a more inviting, positive technical response.

These two aspects also exist with regard to other *mitzvot*, such as at marketplaces selling *lulav* and *etrog* supplies before Sukkot, or with regard to *sukka* arrangements on a Bnei Akiva *tiyyul*, or *minyan* availability at the Kotel, etc. My father took these matters very seriously, and, in my eyes, with a certain defiance to the existing order. He saw with simplicity and clarity that women need to participate, and to that end, one needs to give them a place, in every sense. Without being welcomed, they will not arrive. At every opportunity when he would participate in prayers at the Kotel, whether at a family *simcha* or at the Yeshiva’s service on Yom Yerushalayim, he would insist that the tefilla be conducted near the *mehitza*, so that women can hear and participate from the other side. For years, I accompanied him to *minha* on Shabbat at the *Shtieblach*, and he would gladly protest, requesting that all the men learning in the women’s section leave, because his daughter wanted to recite *minha*.

It never crossed his mind to calculate the number of seats in the *sukka* based on the number of men. And in the days when no one even considered purchasing a *lulav* and *etrog* for women, he would insist on departing immediately after *Hallel*, to come to the entrance of the women’s section, to bring his set to us, and of course, on the fi rst day to make a *kinyan* (transfer) to us so that we could fulfill “*lakhem*” (“they shall be yours”). These examples and others clearly show the need to make a place and opportunity for women, and a willingness to invest in it. In my mind, this conduct also shows profound respect for women, for their spiritual world and for their religious needs. In stark contrast, some do not see and do not toil to fi nd a place, either physically or socially, for women in places where their role is non-essential. Pushing women aside even in a merely “technical” manner is indicative, to my mind, of the creation of a hierarchy, whether explicit or implicit, in the synagogue or religious world generally, when there is no halakhic reason or need for it; at times this behavior can border on disparagement. Indeed, if there is a permanent *mehitza* for women in the daily synagogue (often a room which doubles as a *bet midrash*), there will be less space for those men who arrive late, but the space will always be accessible to women.

My father respected, valued, and made a place for women at religious events which were not related to services: at a *shiur* (he would make sure to distribute source sheets to the women, and also to look over to their side), at a wedding ceremony (he did not give active roles to women, but many brides that my father married off can testify that both the halakhic and technical discussion during the ceremony were conducted jointly with the bride and the groom), in halakhic discussions related to family matters he always turned to the wife as well, and in the recitation of *Tehillim* at the family *Simhat Bet ha-Sho’eva*. In none of these examples did he feel that this was solely men’s activity, and he did not cause the women to feel that way.

On the substantive level, regarding those matters that my father felt there was a contradiction between the female desire to participate (for important and valid reasons) and Jewish tradition, particularly regarding synagogue practice, my father resisted change. Preserving the existing practice within the realm of sanctity overcame the need to give more space for women. In the aforementioned talk from 2008, my father analyzed this challenge:

In every realm that arises, there are two elements that should be examined: the strict halakhic point, along with the other implications that the matter has on the social and communal-national level. Thus, in order for women to initiate a change, they must overcome two hurdles: both the halakhic test and the test of that which is desirable on a communal and value-based level. In the world of halakha, one who wishes to continue the halakhic tradition is in a stronger position than one who wishes to challenge it.8

Later in that same article, my father expressed regret over the fact that those women who wish to advance in divine service by founding women’s prayer services, turn away from the strict letter of halakha. The same goes for women reading from the Torah without *berakhot* (blessings), which my father opposed, but not from a strict halakhic perspective:

Nevertheless, I am concerned that viewed broadly and over the long term, this change will divide the community, will undermine the leadership and heritage of the Jewish people, and will even harm the existence of halakhic prayer gatherings, such that the loss will be greater than the gain.9

It should be noted that the female audience with which my father grapples on these matters is, in many ways, of his own creation. Those women, for whom the gates of study were opened, those women who learn and who feel that they are at home in the world of the Oral Law, often desire to fi nd greater communal expression, for themselves personally and for the female populace generally. My father understood that learning is a necessary condition for creating this bond and connection. He also refused, in his conversation with R. Haim Sabato, to view learning as the beginning of a “slippery slope.”10 In his view, learning creates a stronger connection to *mesora*.

***Implications***

It seems to me that increased opportunities for women’s Torah learning have impacted upon two realms: they have created a stronger connection to *mesora*, and they have driven a stronger desire for involvement and innovation. A woman who has her own *lulav* will come to the synagogue on *Hol ha-Mo’ed*, and she might seek out a way to be a participant (in circling a Torah scroll) during the recitation of *Hoshanot*, which I presume my father would have opposed. I think that a community needs to give thought to how women can take an active part in *Hoshanot*, even if, in the Temple, they did not circle the altar. Ten years ago, I never felt that this was lacking, as there were few other women in the synagogue with a *lulav*. However, as, from year to year, the number of women outfitted with *lulav* and *etrog* has increased, the deficiency becomes more apparent.

It is conceivable that the profound bond between Torah study by women and fulfilling *mitzvot* (albeit without a communal manifestation), as envisioned by my father, was a proper path for individuals, or is adequate for a generation or two, but that it cannot endure over time. The religious community is indeed, regarding some of these issues, at a watershed point where it needs to determine whether it wishes to give a greater place to women, including in the communal sphere. Many women, myself included, would like greater involvement, greater partnership and responsibility. We must remember that women’s involvement in many religious realms today may seem obvious, but there were previous breakthroughs in those areas as well. There are natural processes that transpire across the religious spectrum, whether or not they are spoken of, and there are definitely changes afoot: eulogies being delivered at funerals, *divrei* Torah at communal events, heads of institutions, and *Rabbaniyyot* of schools, although surely open questions remain.

It seems to me that we need to examine the alternatives precisely out of this dilemma and tension. How will the spiritual world of both men and women look, if women are excluded from the spheres of religious intellect and spirit, and remain only in the secular world? Will there be apathy, rebelliousness, or scorn on the part of the girls toward the religious world that we are trying to transmit to them? Is the real threat the women who seek to dance with a *sefer* Torah on Simhat Torah, or the high school girls who sleep until noon because they lack the interest or commitment to rise for prayer? My father believed that there should be a third option: women whose religious activism expresses itself through service of God and study of His Torah, without need or desire to advocate for changing the role of women in the larger public arena. I am uncertain if or for whom it will remain relevant in the long term given the current cultural milieu.

My father was certainly cognizant of the difficulty of the task imposed upon a woman who sought to strive, only to discover that not everything is possible. My father did not gloss over the reality, nor did he try to convince us that a secondary route is better for us, or that the tendencies of our souls are such that they do not need these other *mitzvot*. He did not see things that way. He suggested to us to see this withdrawal that halakha forces upon us as an aspect of the acceptance of the yoke of heaven, *kabbalat ol malkhut shamayim*, sacrifi ce and subordination before the Torah—indeed, as my grandfather taught, the accepting of halakhic limits is itself cathartic.11 And in this regard, my father wrote:

For a God-fearing woman who truly serves God, there is a certain challenge. On one hand, assuming that the will to fulfill *mitzvot* and serve the Almighty burns within her, she will desire to fulfill all the *mitzvot*, and her disqualification will bother her. On the other hand, here the *berakha* of “*she-asani ki-rtzono*” (for He has made me in accordance with His will) enters into the picture. At times, one’s spiritual level is also measured based on one’s willingness to sacrifice. The relinquishment is done relative to men, and the sacrifice involved, both in terms of the greater sacrifice and in terms of the divine service involved.12

*Hagiga* (16b) cites the view of Rabbi Yosei that Jewish women are allowed to place their hands upon offerings in the Temple “in order to please women (*kedei la’asot nahat ru’ah la-nashim*).” In discussions, both oral and written, my father would raise this factor, despite its problematic nature, as a serious consideration that should be taken into account where there is no prohibition. My father, as was his way, would weigh each case based on a cost-benefit analysis, along with taking into account short-term versus long-term ramifications. He understood well, and told me numerous times, that it was important to him to encourage that which was permitted for women, in order to give women a true, meaningful place, and to prevent a sense of general alienation toward the Torah or the community. My father’s attitude can be summarized with the following passage:

If I were a woman, I would expect from my *posek* that he would seek out my “*nahat ru’ah*,” that he would be sensitive, that he would be honest, and that he would know and understand [my needs] with courage and integrity.13

I am a woman, and my *posek* gave me high expectations of myself and my religious world. Apparently, I have “merited” a number of frustrations as a result of this as well, but I have also merited having powerful experiences of *talmud* Torah, along with a rich, meaningful, internal religious world and fear of God. I thank Him daily that I was not spared these frustrations and pain, as they brought me, and others like me, to a thirst, that at times I have not had the ability to quench. In this period when the expectations have risen, there is a need for proper discretion, courage, and honesty to see how to help women transition from the sidelines to center stage in even more realms. Our entire leadership, male and female alike, needs to follow in the ways of our fathers, and find ways to allow the entire community to ascend, out of profound faithfulness to halakha and to the *mesora* of the Jewish people.

\* Translated by Rav Dov Karoll. Published in partnership with *Tradition: A Journal of Jewish Thought*. This essay originally appeared in *Tradition* 52:3 (Summer 2020).

1 Originally published in R. Aharon Lichtenstein, “Fundamental Problems Regarding the Education of the Woman” [Hebrew], in *Ha-isha ve-Hinnukhah*, ed. Ben-Zion Rosenfeld (Amana, 1980), 157–163. Excerpts from this article appeared as “Torah Study for Women,” *Ten Da’at* 3:3 (Spring 1989), 7–8. The citation above is from p. 158 in “Fundamental Problems” and p. 7 of “Torah Study for Women.”

2 “Fundamental Problems,” 159; “Torah Study for Women,” 7.

3 “Fundamental Problems,” 159, “Torah Study for Women,” 7–8.

4 R. Aharon Lichtenstein with R. Haim Sabato, *Mevakshei Fanekha* (Yediot Books, 2011), 170–171; in English as *Seeking His Presence: Conversations with Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein* (Yediot Books, 2016), 212–213.

5 Originally publicized on the website of the Ma’ayanot school, it was subsequently published by *The Lehrhaus* as “Women, Talmud Torah and Avodat Hashem” at: www.thelehrhaus.com/commentary-short-articles/2017/10/29/women-talmud-studyand- avodat-hashem.

6 “The Status of the Woman in the Modern Era” [Hebrew], *Alon Shevut Bogrim* #23 (Kislev 5769/2008), 105–116 (edited transcript of a lecture delivered at Yeshivat Har Etzion).

7 “The Status,” 115.

8 “The Status,” 114.

9 “Responsum of Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein” [Hebrew], in *Bat Mitzva: Kovetz Ma’amarim*, ed. Sara Friedland Ben Arza (Matan/Urim, 2002), 515. This selection was published in English in *Seeking His Presence*, 221.

10 *Mevakshei*, 173–174; *Seeking*, 216–217.

11 Joseph B. Soloveitchik, “Catharsis,” *TRADITION* 17:2 (1978), 38–54.

12 “The Status,” 112.

13 “The Status,” 116.