

ABSTRACTS

Vol. 1

Women's Silence in 'The Life of a Worker in her Homeland' (1935) by Henya Pekelman

Talia Pfefferman

The absence of 'voice', that is, silence, is characteristic of women's history. Silence was typically construed as an expression of passivity, obedience, lack of knowledge, and the starting point from where women regained their social and political voices.

The article analyzes an autobiography published in Palestine in 1935 by a Zionist pioneer laborer who emigrated from Europe in 1921. The autobiography serves as an extraordinary historical and descriptive source of the daily life of pioneer women in the 1920s, and reveals how women who came to Eretz-Israel with high ideals, a strong sense of self-awareness, and belief in gender equality (that is, they arrived 'with a voice') ultimately adopted self-imposed silence as they came up against the social, political and gender realities of the Yishuv.

The dialectic reflected in this particular life story emphasizes the multiple roles that silence played in women's history. It suggests a new perception of silence as a strategy for expressing rage against the prevalent power relations in society. The conclusion is that the feminine voice in history appears as a deferent voice, one in which speech and silence were not so much dichotomous as complementary.

The Revolt within the Revolt: The Struggle of the Women of Ein Harod to Pull Guard Duty in 1936

Meir Chazan

From its inception Kibbutz Ein Harod was one of the dominant collectives in the Labor Movement and Zionist land settlement. Ein Harod was also the home of Yitzhak Tabenkin, one of the leaders of the United Kibbutz Movement, and other powerful figures wielding ideological, organizational, economic and political clout, such as Shlomo Lavi, Aharon Zisling, Haimn Sturman, Luba Levita, Reuven (Vinia) Cohen and Gershon Ostrovsky. The only element missing in this picture is the women.

The article assumes that Ein Harod's strength as a key player in shaping the Labor Movement – setting aside the endless internal tensions and stormy ideological clashes – cannot be properly understood without analyzing the part played by the kibbutz's female members. Gender was a basic issue in the women's effort to integrate into the collective life, advance their personal and social status in the collective, and uphold pioneering and egalitarian ideals. Gender was the basic level in their struggle to determine their own destiny and the success of the Zionist enterprise. At Ein Harod women made up nearly half the population. Their activity in the public domain was the driving force behind behavior norms and the way things were run. Their influence went far beyond Ein Harod's courtyard and the Jezreel Valley.

I prove this theoretical presumption by examining a number of Ein Harod women – Eva Tabenkin, Shulamit Zharnovskaya, and Lilia Basvitch – and their struggle to pull guard duty in the first phase of the Arab Revolt in 1936. Their success may have been brief but it was a breakthrough, albeit mostly a symbolic one, in the stated aim of Jewish women in the Yishuv to play an active role in defense and perimeter security. The women regarded this as the frontlines for gaining equal rights and shouldering responsibility in building the Jewish national homeland.

The article is based on protocols from Ein Harod members' meetings and women's special discussion groups, kibbutz newsletters, contemporary correspondence, and articles from *Mibifnim*, *Tzror Michtavim*, and *Dvar Hapo'elet*.

‘The Hygiene of a Woman’s Life’ – Gender, Nationalism and Labor
in the Writing of the Gynecologist Dr. Miriam Aharonova
(1889-1967)

Sachlav Stoler-Liss and Shifra Shvartz

Dr. Miriam Aharonova was a famous, highly sought after gynecologist at the General Sick Fund in the Yishuv and in the early years of the state, and a long-time, senior physician in the General Sick Fund. Born in White Russia, Aharonova studied medicine in St. Petersburg and graduated as a certified gynecologist. Beginning in 1921 she served as director of the maternity hospital in Briansk. In 1929 she left a brilliant career and immigrated to Palestine with her husband Dr. Avraham Aharonov. After a brief stay in Ein Harod, she transferred to Tel Aviv and started working as a gynecologist. At the same time she founded the first advisory station in Eretz-Israel.

Along with her daily medical work Aharonova published medical and social articles on women’s health and social roles. She often wrote for both medical and popular journals and published the first book in Hebrew that dealt exclusively with women’s health. She was especially interested in advising mothers (and future mothers) on fertility issues and birth control, and in establishing counseling stations where prenuptial couples could receive a preliminary medical examination for fertility.

Aharonova’s writings reflect her medical ideology, socialist vision, nationalist beliefs, and gender views. The latter focused on women, especially their reproductive functioning. Her position on fertility (at least three children per woman), abortion, birth control, and sexual restraint, as well as female employment and place on the battlefield, offer a fascinating look at gender relations and perspectives in the Yishuv.

The Medicalization of Motherhood: Ethnic Relations
and the Education of Jewish Mizrahi Mothers in Mandate Palestine

Dafna Hirsch

Modernization projects around the world have often reshaped maternity care, with the medical establishment playing a major role in this process. Pregnancy, parturition and childcare gradually came under scientific regulation and 'expert' control. This article examines the medicalization of motherhood in the Yishuv during the Mandate period, with special emphasis on the education of Mizrahi mothers by the Hadassah Medical Organization. Public health nurses of the Hadassah Infant Welfare Centers introduced mothers to 'scientific' models of childcare and supervised their implementation through home visits and the mothers' regular visits to the centers.

I contend, first, that the nurses distinguished between two 'types' of mothers: the overindulgent mother who was implicitly or explicitly Ashkenazi; and the neglectful mother who was explicitly or implicitly Mizrahi. While both 'types' were considered in need of childcare instruction, Mizrahi mothers were regarded as unfit for their maternal role and therefore they were seen as more urgently in need of the nurses' instruction and close supervision. Secondly, I argue that *Mizrahi* mothers did not indiscriminately accept the scientific repertoire but rather selectively appropriated models of conduct.

'My Daughter Burns like Fire':
Mothers and Neglected Daughters in Tel Aviv
during the 1930s and 1940s

Tammy Razi

The article examines the professional and public discourse on neglected girls and their mothers in Tel Aviv during the 1930s and 1940s. Hundreds of girls, mostly teenagers, were classified as neglected, 'sexually promiscuous', and in danger of becoming prostitutes or already engaged in that pursuit. These girls and their families came under the supervision of the municipal welfare authorities and volunteers from women's organizations.

Based on the documents of contemporary social workers, legal files (such as reports by probation officers), and a comparative study of similar cases in Europe and the United-States, the article probes the social and cultural contexts in which the girls were expected to be closely tracked in both the private and public spheres.

It contends that when rapid changes have an immediate impact on traditional values and roles in the private sphere, as in times of immigration or urbanization, society and culture tend to focus on the girls and blame them for upsetting tradition by their allegedly promiscuous behavior. In this context mothers are generally accused of either setting a bad example or shirking their parental obligations which include 'keeping the girls at home'.

The 'Law of Nature' versus the 'Dictate of the Movement':
Motherhood and Non-Motherhood in the Yishuv (1920-1945)

Bat-Sheva Margalit-Stern

Today, as in the past, motherhood is an inhibiting factor in women's status and the roles they fulfill. But motherhood has also enabled women to redefine their biological nature by strengthening their position in the public sphere. This article attempts to analyze the theory and practice of motherhood and non-motherhood in the Yishuv in the first half of the twentieth century. It examines various viewpoints held by men and women in the Zionist establishment and addresses the following questions: How did gender, socioeconomic status, and ethnic origin influence the praxis of motherhood and non-motherhood in the period of nation building? What were the cultural origins of the motherhood ideal, and how did they influence women's political status in the Yishuv?

A Public or Private Account, a Case Study:
Recruit Mothers in the British Forces in World War Two

Anat Granit-Hacohen

Between 1942 and 1946 nearly three thousand Jewish women served in the ATS (Auxiliary Territorial Services) and nearly six hundred in the WAAF (Women Auxiliary Air Force). One hundred and twenty of them had children – fifty with grown children and approximately seventy with toddlers and young children.

Most of the mothers were not born in Palestine but had been living in the country for many years. They were urban dwellers and the vast majority of them had only one or two children. Many enlisted for ideological or patriotic reasons, but many others sought activity in the public sphere or escape from day-to-day toil. Mothers of young children devised various solutions for their children's care: leaving them with the husband, relatives, or on kibbutzim. Neither the Yishuv society nor the army encouraged this type of enlistment and the families often paid a heavy price for the mother's military service.

The enlisted mothers seem to have defied the perception of their traditional role. They believed that mothers had the right to self-expression in all areas of their identity and that motherhood need not take precedence over national identity. Be this as it may, this phenomenon was not widespread in the Yishuv and appears to have been the result of 'the pressure of the hour' rather than a social or conceptual sea change. Hence, it failed to alter the Yishuv's approach toward women's status and role as a mother.

Dr. Bat Sheva Yonis-Guttman: A Prototype of Zionist Doctor in
Eretz-Israel During the Last Years of the Ottoman Period

Zipora Shehory-Rubin

The first women doctors in Eretz-Israel in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century were the health practitioners who laid the groundwork of the country's medical system. They were young female physicians, still in

their twenties or thirties, graduates of European medical schools, intellectuals, independent, highly motivated, who believed in the future of medicine in the country. They acted tirelessly, devoting all their energy and knowledge to establishing the country's medical infrastructure for a new generation that would grow up healthy in mind and body. These young women came to the country with a sense of vocation and belief in medicine as a Zionist national goal, not just as a source of income.

One of the first female doctors and pioneers in gynecology, Dr. Bat Sheva Yonis-Guttman (1880-1947), immigrated to Eretz-Israel in 1909. She had the distinction of being the first female doctor of Gedera and Tel Aviv. Despite this honor, information about her is exceedingly scarce, and historical research has all but forgotten her contribution to medical advances in the country. The aims of the article, are manifold: to restore her to her proper place in the history of Zionism; shed light on her work in the first collective settlements at the end of the Ottoman period; retrace her multi-sided, public, medical activity in the Jewish community of Jaffa and Tel Aviv; discuss her contribution to the country's fledgling medical system; and to reinstate her position in the medical history of Eretz-Israel.

For thirty-eight years Dr. Bat Sheva Yonis-Guttman dedicated most of her time and energy to medical work and voluntary public service. She played a leading role in the Tel Aviv health committee and various other women's organizations that supported the weaker population, especially babies and children, and that elevated women's status and championed their rights. She was also involved in pioneering welfare work and the establishment of day care centers for toddlers.

Having celebrated Tel Aviv's centennial in 2009, it seems fitting to remember Dr. Bat Sheva Yonis-Guttman – the city's first female doctor.

‘Women in a Male Toga’: Women's Integration into the Legal Profession in the Yishuv and Israel

Eyal Katvan

In 1930 prestate Israel two female lawyers were admitted to the bar. Until

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Israel gained statehood in 1948, only forty-two women lawyers were admitted to the bar compared to 1300 men. Today female lawyers in Israel have achieved numerical equality (as well as allegedly essential equality). This equality and concomitant collegiality may be explained, inter alia, by women lawyers' distancing themselves from any 'feminine' identification or approaches, a move that has resulted in the absence of a 'different voice' in the legal arena.

The article discusses the initial integration of female lawyers into the legal profession. It examines their various approaches to gaining acceptance and professional advancement, such as founding and participating in women's associations, retaining their maiden name, and so forth, while simultaneously coping with domestic and familial duties. This perspective hopes to demonstrate that women lawyers not only strove to emulate their male colleagues, but, paradoxically, employed feminist activism in their effort.

Gender and Mental Health in the Yishuv and During the First Decade of the State of Israel

Rakefet Zalashik and Nadav Davidovitch

It is generally stated that gender differences exist in the risk factors and characteristics of mental illnesses and in the application of psychiatric treatment. These claims have been broached in various ways throughout the history of psychiatry, as doctors try to put gender differences on scientific footing. Many historical and sociological works describe the social and cultural assumptions that are often behind the claims of masculine and feminine roles in society and the definitions of 'normal' masculinity and femininity.

The article examines the attitude of the psychiatric profession during the Mandate and State of Israel toward mental illnesses from the point of view of gender. Jewish psychiatrists in the Yishuv and the State of Israel had a complex, multi-leveled view of mentally ill men and women. One of these levels was based on gender. But despite gender's paramount importance in the history of psychiatry in Israel, it has never received an in-depth study.

The article analyzes the relationship between gender, mental illnesses (as expressed in somatic treatment such as lobotomies, electro-convulsive therapy, and insulin), and mentally ill prisoners during in the Yishuv and the State of Israel. In addition, it describes gender's links to other important areas (such as immigration and ethnic origin) that influenced the psychiatric treatment of the mentally ill in the period above mentioned.

Where to Have the Baby? The National Laws for Parturition During the British Mandate

Omi Leissner

During the twentieth century parturition in the industrialized world shifted from the home to the hospital. In the absence of proof attesting to its health benefits, researchers tend to view this process as a function of competing interests, especially between those of doctors and midwives (the traditional birth assistants). In Eretz-Israel in the 1940s, the rate of Jewish births in hospitals reached ninety percent. The article traces the various local interests that underlie that figure.

Specifically, on the basis of archival material related to the Hadassah Organization (and Mother-and-Child Clinics set up by Hadassah during the Mandate) I claim that here too a professional battle may be discerned. Although the doctors at first supported 'power-sharing' with the midwives, they gradually made an increasing number of decisions in their own favor.

In any case, the doctors obviously did not act alone in their drive to have mothers hospitalized during parturition. The clinic nurses backed by Hadassah encouraged, if not coerced, the women to give birth in hospitals. It also appears that most women were eager to comply with these dictates. This scenario correlates with the findings of historians who have recently noted the powerful influence wielded by the Zionist medical authorities in the name of Israeli 'nation-building.'

Women's Meeting Points in the Early Days of the 'New Yishuv'
(1878-1918): A Look of Their Writings

Yaffah Berlovitz

The article traces the development of the women's community in the beginning of the Jewish colonization in Eretz-Israel, through the writings of women of the first aliyot (immigrations): Women-settlers of the First Aliya and women-laborers of the Second Aliya.

Reviewing the writings of these women (documents, diaries, letters, memoirs, short stories) exposes other sectors of women whom they encountered in daily life: Women born in the Old Jewish Yishuv (Jerusalem, Safed, Tiberias), Oriental-Sephardic as well as European-Ashkenazi; Yemenite women immigrated to Eretz-Israel (1882, 1908,1912); Arabic women with whom relationships were either commercial or domestic (employment).

The article studies the activity and solidarity among the new-comers women seeking their identity as the 'New Woman' in the national life of the country and in their struggle for equality and rights (in the private and public spheres). Two basic questions are addressed: to what degree did women's marginal status in all areas of male society motivate them to act as a united force regardless of their religious, ideological, ethnic, or national affiliation; and, did the level of their activity proceed according to Carol Gilligan's 'developing moral model' (in the sense of communication and giving) or Phyllis Chesler's 'ambivalent subversive model' (based on competition and 'indirect aggression')?

The conclusion drawn is that even if the women's community in the early waves of Zionist immigration managed to create a socialization of 'women for women', it generally remained in either internal, separatist collective frameworks or on parallel competitive tracks. In reality, it remained perpetually stuck in a kind of dialectical linkage between Gilligan's and Chesler's models. Despite the efforts that went into meetings and discourses for boundary crossing, women were constrained by ideological and socioeconomic tensions to remain loyal to the dominant male hegemony, even though this hegemony excluded them from its affairs.

Conservatism Blazes the Trail:
The Image of Women Religious-Zionist Leaders in the Yishuv

Lilach Rosenberg-Friedman

The article analyzes the biographical and leadership traits of three religious-Zionist women who led thousands of women in various areas of activity. The discussion focuses on specific female leadership qualities and examines to what extent the traditional view of gender enabled female leadership to subsist at all. The traditional approach to women leaders seems to overlook the essence of revolutionary 'female leadership.' Interestingly, despite the religious limitations imposed on female leadership, these women leaders sought to preserve the traditional fetters. This paradox is a striking feature of their leadership capability and is also the main theme of the article.

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Zionism, Masculinity and Feminism

Orit Kamir

This article focuses on two questions: Why was Zionism not more of a feminist movement at its outset and, how can it recreate itself to become more feminist? This inquiry offers a fresh understanding of Israel's past and suggests an agenda for contemporary Zionist and Israeli studies. Other questions dealt with the historical background that precluded a more feminist Zionism; the ways in which contemporary Zionism can become more pro-feminist; and the 'type' of feminism that Zionism can come to terms with.

The article claims that at the turn of the twentieth century Zionism was, inter alia, a men's liberation movement that sought to free the Jewish male from his diasporic femininity. As such, Zionism's basic principles clashed with the interests of every woman's liberation movement. Zionism could not tolerate the feminist assertion that all humans are social equals ('liberal feminism'). It rejected the feminist argument that feminine traits are as worthy as masculine ones ('cultural feminism'), and the feminist demand

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that women, as a group, are entitled to equal social power ('dominance feminism'). Zionism's celebrated 'egalitarianism' merely meant that Zionist women were obliged to help the men-folk in national redemption and masculinization. A century later, Zionism's survival depends on its ability to recreate itself and adapt its masculine outlook to universal human values. This transformation will make it compatible with Israel's respect-based feminism.

Masculinities in the Theater: The Bunker as the Locus of the Clash between Forms of Israeli Masculinity

Sigal Barkai

Many Israeli plays deal with soldiers and military life in wartime. The article, which is based on a larger study of approximately eighty plays, focuses on eleven plays that portray soldiers' life in a besieged bunker, military post, or garrison. This dramatic milieu has repeatedly appeared, in various forms, for five decades. The first plays were written in 1949, immediately after Israel's War of Independence, while the last play in the study reflects bunker life in Lebanon prior to Israel's withdrawal in 2000.

The bunker is a symbol of national masculinity. It is also a static, defensive arena that enables a close observation of soldiers. The analysis of these plays examines theatrical materials through the lens of Masculinity Studies – a sociological theory that assumes the presence of multiple masculinities in a given society. Such studies focus on difference, multiplicity, and relationships among men. The article presents an interpretive and critical reading that emphasizes the range of masculinities in 'bunker plays' – in contrast to the hegemonic, ideal figure of the commander or combat soldier. It also compares civilian masculine identity constructs with the masculine identity forged in a military environment.

Unlike the usual representation of bunker life of intimacy and camaraderie, the plays in the article offer a different image of male bonding. The harsh conditions of bunker life highlight differences, hierarchies, and conflicts among men that bring out prejudices, stereotypes, arrogance and

competitiveness. In Israel, where the citizenry perceives itself living ‘in a bunker,’ that is in a continuous state of siege, these plays may be read as a microcosm of society with its multiple struggles and narratives.

The Threefold Exile: The Female Holocaust Survivor in Israeli Cinema

Liat Steir-Livny

The Zionist leaders had different views of the ‘New Jew’ that ranged from the integration of Diasporic mentality and Hebrew culture to the total negation of European roots. Zionist cinema, which developed alongside the Yishuv and, in a certain sense, was its public relations envoy, simplified the Zionist discourse on the ‘New Jew’ versus the ‘Diaspora Jew’. In the first decades of the twentieth century the cinematographic model of the masculine ‘New Jew’ was contrasted with the ‘Diaspora Jew’ who was represented as feminine, passive, and alienated from the soil.

The local cinema introduced the Holocaust survivor theme immediately after WW II. Its English-language films tried to create a direct link between the DP problem (Jewish displaced persons in Europe) and the Zionist solution (opening the doors of Eretz-Israel to the flood of refugees and establishing the Jewish state). Film producers realized the importance of depicting the Holocaust survivors who arrived in Eretz-Israel as refugees broken in body and spirit. The survivors in these films manage to rebuild their lives only in Eretz-Israel thanks to the kindheartedness of the local population. The cinema portrayed the complex encounter between the Yishuv and the survivors according to the initial dichotomous theme of ‘them’ and ‘us’, ‘Diaspora’ versus ‘Hebrew-Yishuv’. The Holocaust appears as the culmination of Diasporic shame.

The article traces the threefold negative image of the female Holocaust survivor as she appears in Yishuv and Israeli cinema from the 1940s to the present. It describes the postwar image of the female survivor and its place in the contemporary masculine Zionist culture. It proceeds chronologically to examine whether the female image underwent changes that paralleled

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the events and processes that transformed the masculine Zionist ethos and perception of the Diaspora and Holocaust. The following films come under review: *My Father's House* (Herbert Kline, 1947), *The Faithful City* (Joseph Lejtes, 1952), *He Walked Through the Fields* (Yosef Millo, 1967), *The Wooden Rifle* (Ilan Moshenson, 1979), *The Summer of Aviya* (Eli Cohen, 1988), *New Land* (Orna Ben-Dor, 1995), *Kedma* (Amos Gitai, 2002).

Between the Sea and the Mikvha The Mermaids' Voice in Contemporary Israeli Cinema

Anat Zanger

What is the connection between water and feminism in Israeli cinema? The sea, swimming pool, and mikva (Jewish ritual bath) are sites where a growing number of heroines in Israeli cinema are found. Flowing water, dripping and stagnant water tell the story of female protagonists, their inner world, as well as the story of their society

In Western mythology (Homer's Odysseus and Ovid for example) sirens and mermaids are creatures with mesmerizing voices and infinite knowledge that are the secrets of their magical attraction. However, analysis of the myth shows that although the 'siren knowledge' exists in the margins of patriarchal social order (Sells, Laura, 1995), it is still perceived as threatening.

The article traces the interaction between the 'sirene' myth and its modern version - the 'little mermaid' - in the context of contemporary Israeli cinema. The discussion focuses on Anat Zuria's documentary film 'Tahora' ('Purity') (2000) and three recent fiction films: 'Limareet Ayain' ('Out of Sight') (Noah Greenberg and Dani Syrkin, 2005); 'Sodot' ('Secrets') (Hadar Galron and Avi Neshet, 2007); and 'Meduzot' ('Jellyfish') (Shira Geffen and Etgar Keret, 2007).

Through these films I read the spatial and narrative function of water as an 'objective correlative' (in the words of T.S. Eliot) in the quest for the woman's voice. The article identifies the feminine locus in the aqueous medium and contrasts with the land space, an area identified in the myth as the masculine domain. The repetitions of sirene and mermaid mythical

elements in these films contains (sometimes directly, sometimes indirectly) signifying the historical and social moment of desire to return to the water element and to female knowledge.

Models of Femininity in Israeli Women's Magazines During the Six-Day War

Einat Lachover

The article examines the construction of feminine identities during the Six-Day War in the popular women's magazines *La'Isha* and *Att*, and analyzes them in the historical-cultural context. The peripheral status of this genre invites more authentic and less hegemonic expressions of feminine and national ideologies.

The research sample includes thirty-eight *La'Isha* and nine *Att* issues published between April and December 1967. Various verbal and visual rhetorical strategies and linguistic patterns are analyzed, and the prevalent values and myths of the period are discussed.

The research results show that the journals offered diverse and sometimes contradictory versions of femininity. During peacetime they promoted a discourse on private sphere values that reflected the 'traditional feminine' model, but during war they emphasized the national-masculine rhetoric, though not entirely excluding the private discourse. 'The dual model' – 'traditional femininity' alongside 'national femininity' – exemplifies the genderification of nationality, as well as the nationalization of the feminine space in Israeli society. In addition, a 'challenging femininity' model is suggested, mainly through the figure of the 'independent woman' who is the successor to the Yishuv's pioneer model.

The multiple definitions of femininity and their fluctuating degrees of dominance during wartime and peacetime demonstrate the flexibility of the women's magazines and their adaptation to women's dilemmas in different periods. Despite the similarities between the two magazines, some differences are also noted.

Images and Representations of *Haredi* (Ultra-Orthodox) Women in
the *Haredi* Women's Press since the Founding of the State

Rivka Neriya Ben-Shahar

This article deals with texts on the issue of modesty, published in the women's sections of *Haredi* (Ultra-Orthodox Jewish) press in Israel from the early 1960s until the end of the 1980s. The objective of this article is to understand how the press functions as a socialization tool with respect to controlling the feminine body in a traditional society. The question at the foundation of this article is how the issue of modesty is reflected in women's sections of Haredi partisan newspapers during those years. In order to answer this question, a broad corpus was examined, including all the texts published in those years in the women's sections of the *Ha'modia* and *Yated Neeman* newspapers, and all the articles addressing modesty were selected for further study.

This research is based on the assumption that the texts play an important role in the press in the reality-construction of both male and female readers. In *Haredi* society, the printed press is a major socialization agent, and in the years on which this research focused, these newspapers were practically the only ones read by their readership. One can therefore hypothesize that their influence was very substantial. This article scrutinizes the characteristics, the motifs and the rhetoric of the texts that addressed the issue of modesty and created, reinforced and ingrained the dominant ideology that *Haredi* society wanted to imbue in its daughters.

‘The Purpose of Creation is Man’
Women's Status in a Polemic on Marital Therapy
in *Haredi* (Ultra-Orthodox) Societies

Isaac Hershkovitz

The article examines Hirsch Travis's book *Pirkei Hanhagat Ha'Bayit* (*Lessons in Household Management*) and the debate on its publication in the late 1970s, especially by the renowned *halakhic* (traditional Jewish legal) judge, Rabbi Menashe Klein.

Travis' book is far from a modern approach toward women's status despite its impression as a modern, professional composition supportive of women's needs, desires and whims. Furthermore, Travis scorns feminine intelligence and denies the woman's legitimacy in the geminate organ. He excludes her from the male partner's estate, positing her merely as an object, a catalyst in the true relationship that men should aspire to – a religious connection to God.

Klein criticizes Travis's patriarchal point of view, even though the latter does not negate feminine epistemology to an extreme degree. Since Klein believes that women are capable of relating to men in a true partnership, he legitimizes female religious ambitions. He holds that the orthodox lifestyle (contrary to Travis' claims) enhances both the patriarchal system and feminine epistemology. He protests Travis's humiliating attitude toward women, attributing it to the scourge of modern influences. Thus, Klein, the ultra-orthodox mentor, expresses semi-egalitarian views despite his patriarchal beliefs.

‘The State is the Protector of Women and Children’
Child Support (Payment Assurance)

Anat Herbst

The article discusses the establishment of social rights for single mothers in Israel. The topic is examined through the prism of the 1972 Alimony Law, according to which, women whose former husbands fail to pay child support are guaranteed a minimal monthly stipend from the National Insurance Institute (which is also responsible for collecting the accumulated debts from the former husband). Furthermore, the stipend is subject to severe income criteria.

The Study shows that a number of social agents were involved in formulating the law: WIZO (Women's International Zionist Organization), the Ministry of Justice, the Knesset, and the National Insurance Institute. In the debate over the justification of granting stipends at the time of the law's introduction, victimization and severe hardship were employed as arguments for entitlement. This meant, in effect, that the women were treated as public

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charity cases deserving of governmental pity rather than as citizens who were owed justice and protection by the state.

The study also reveals gender role structuring: men are considered active, independent providers, while women are looked upon as the passive party, dependant on men for livelihood and child care. Under these conditions the state is obligated to ensure that women are provided with the protection denied them by their former husbands. Underlying this concept is the assumption that women without men are unprotected. Thus, when men fail to provide basic needs for their children – the state is required to step in.

Working Families in Law and Justice: Neo-Liberalism and Human Rights

Michal Frenkel, Daphna Hacker, Yael Braudo

The article examines the legal arrangements for the rights and interests of working families within the wider context of two global processes. We discuss the legislative and legal aspects of several basic areas in which law and justice establish or protect the parents' ability to balance employment and family obligations. These areas include: work hours; maternity leave; dismissal during pregnancy or in the postnatal period; work absence because of child care; nursing during work hours; child care services and child sickness.

Despite the obvious connection between the global spread of neo-liberal ideology and diffusion of ideas and practices in human and civil rights (including the advancement of women's rights), research literature tends to deal separately with the two processes and their influence on the neo-liberal discourse (especially labor and corporate law) and the worldwide human rights discourse (especially minority rights). In Israel, too, this distinction appears in the discourse on globalization's influence on law and justice. The article argues that the care of working families in law and justice inherently links these two areas by combining changes in employment with changes in the perception of gender equality. Changes in legislation, adjudication, and regulation in this area reflect the dialectical dynamics taking place in these worlds.

The article calls attention to the importance of the two main global discourses in shaping the areas of law and justice connected to the working family. The neo-liberal economic discourse elevates market needs to the level of supreme importance and subordinates the activity of the state, legislator, and courts. This discourse regards the income earning individual, who is responsible for his personal and family's profit, as the main analytical unit, and subordinates the state's support from the individual to growth possibilities derived from this support. The second discourse, the liberal discourse, grants the right to equal opportunity to members of various social groups. It grants rights to the individual rather than to groups, and attempts to put barriers on the market forces in order to guarantee a more equal distribution of resources.

Ada Fishman-Maimon: Jewish Feminism and Israeli Parliamentary Legislation

Einat Ramon

The article discusses Ada Maimon's feminist worldview that was based on Jewish sources. Maimon was one of the founders of the Zionist Workers Movement in the Yishuv and a member of Mapai (the Labor Party) in the First and Second Knessets. The article analyzes her parliamentary speeches in the first years of statehood. Her speeches are filled with biblical, Talmudic, and traditional references that combine Judaism, Zionism, and a form of Jewish feminism that was unique in her generation. This is evident from the cold-shoulder she received in the Justice Committee and in the Knesset plenum by religious and secular parliamentarians, as well as right-wing and left-wing Knesset members. Her speeches serve as a kind of theoretical summary of a feminist worldview based on Jewish sources. She expressed this view already in her early years (a biographical study of Ada Maimon has yet to be made) when she was a political activist in the socialist-Zionist political party 'Hapo'el Hatza'ir' and educator at the '*Ma'ayanot*' Youth Village.

Only later did her worldview crystallize, which is why her Knesset speeches can be seen as an important stage in her writing and a reflection

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of the history of the Women Workers Movement in Israel. These speeches remain a fascinating feminist interpretation of Jewish sources with Zionist overtones (for example, she believed that national unity took precedence over civil marriages in Israel) and a socialist bent (she regarded Jewish sources as the basis for class and gender equality). Her speeches contain no sharp distinction between religion and secularism that is so common in the history of the Zionist Movement. Maimon was an observant Jew who found her place in the secular camp. Her personal life, like her writing, reflects the dialectic of religious and secular life in the Zionist Workers Movement.

Rabbi Shagar and Cultural Feminism

Ilan Fuchs

Rabbi Shimon Gershon Rosenberg (hereafter, Rabbi Shagar) was one of the most original thinkers in the Orthodox discourse in the last decade. His writing on post-modernism's influence on religious life offers a model in which the disintegration of borders, due to the impact of post-modernism, becomes a springboard for advances in religious life within the traditional Jewish legal framework. One of the key issues he dealt with was women's status. He identified the change in the woman's place in the public sphere as one of the major transformations in modern living, and insisted that the religious legal discourse relate to this change. Much of his work focuses on the cultural/attitudinal feminism school. Cultural feminism, sometimes termed attitudinal or behavioral feminism, is devoted to the uniqueness of the female nature, at the same time it is perpetually criticized for its justification of female nature as defined by the patriarchal establishment. Rabbi Shagar agreed that this was a very serious, complex judgment but added that Jewish religious law was capable of coping with a sanctified past by employing pragmatic argument, such as the male's role in Torah study and the female's role in family care, and that these arguments allow a certain degree of adoption of modern values (even though supporters of modernism often regard the pace of this internalization as too slow). Unlike the works of other Orthodox thinkers who are either ignorant of feminist writing or familiar with

only the basic texts, Rabbi Shagar devoted much time and energy in studying these texts and became an expert on feminist writing. The article deals with two of his articles on Talmud Torah for women. Rabbi Shagar examined the religious legal model of Talmud Torah for women and its link to cultural/attitudinal feminism. Rabbi Shagar presented his own vision of Talmud Torah for women. His texts in the religious legal discourse were unique in that they made wide use of philosophical tools and were often based on worldviews associated with cultural feminism. He dealt with the ‘woman’s voice’, not by relegating it to traditional masculine frameworks, but by seeing the great advantage it had in being freed from masculine epistemology. The contribution of the ‘woman’s voice’ to Torah study lies in its innovation.

The first article deals with Maimonides’ religious legal view of Talmud Torah for women on which Jewish legal discussion is based. It offers an original commentary based on philosophical tools, and compares the terminology and views in the Mishneh Torah with those in the Guide for the Perplexed. In the second article I discuss Beit-Halevi’s reply and compare it to the original position of the Ramam (Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson of Lubavitch).

Women Instructing Women: The Role of Female Instructors at Absorption Centers for Ethiopian Immigrants

Inbal Cicurel & Rachel Sharaby

When the State of Israel was founded, women from the veteran elite served as instructors of female immigrants. These instructors perceived their role as an ideological vocation. In the 1980s the same work was again carried out by female instructors at absorption centers for Ethiopian immigrants. This time, however, the instructors were totally unfamiliar with the immigrants’ culture and were motivated by employment pressures. Since the 1990s, Amharic-speaking, veteran, female Ethiopian immigrants have been assuming the role of instructors of new immigrants.

The article examines three areas of their work: cleanliness and health, parenthood and married life, and attitudes toward the ethnic tradition.

ABSTRACTS

The instructors seem to view themselves as establishment representatives assigned the task of transforming the new immigrants into Israelis. The fact that they come from the same ethnic background as the immigrants creates empathy toward them and facilitates the transmission of the absorption message. The instructors also retain certain aspects of the immigrants' culture, which sometimes reshapes it. Thus, the *somechet* is situated at the interface between Israeli society and the Ethiopian immigrants since she herself is still unempowered and, like the female immigrant, suffers from negative stereotyping.

‘The Secret that Turns the Helpless into Heroes’: Female Empowerment in the Work of Amalia Kahana-Carmon

Lily Rattok

The problem of female self-empowerment is a persistent issue throughout Amalia Kahana-Carmon's work. A post-colonial analysis focusing on gender relations finds a recurring theme in her novels and short stories: if women are to achieve liberty and independence, they must free themselves from the father figure (from the oppression of the Oedipus Complex, the most significant factor of female dependence) and take control of their destinies, even at the price of great suffering and loneliness. The phrase ‘the secret that turns the helpless into heroes’, uttered repeatedly by the young heroine of ‘Ne’ima Sasson Writes Poems’ (1964) as she begs her teacher to reveal the secret to her, is the life-changing knowledge of empowerment. This is an inversion of the unfolding narrative of events and thus underscores Kahana-Carmon's emphasis on individual rather than collective experience, and private rather than public knowledge. Her heroines discover that they have always known the secret and that there is no magical knowledge to be imparted and decoded, only a process of internal transformation emerging from a personal interpretation of experience, such as Ne’ima's act of writing.

A close reading of *Scenes from the Green Duck Bridge* (1984) as a feminist parable shows a complex narrative event generating a universal model of female empowerment based on a Jewish format. The asymmetrical power

struggles between men and women are seen in a new light when compared to the struggles between black slaves and their white masters or between Jews and Gentiles in Europe. An analogy between the figure of the heroine and Moses, the biblical leader who was born into slavery but raised in pharaoh's palace, provides a model for crossing the lines to freedom. The novella's female protagonist, like Moses, releases herself from the oppressive ideology that has kept her in a state of bondage, by recognizing that the source of her submissiveness is the result of being a captive and loving her captor. Like her biblical counterpart, she achieves liberty and independence by exploiting her metaphorical captivity in order to learn the ways of the 'enemy', draw strength from his power, and then escape at the first opportunity. Kahana-Carmon's feminist parable is written as a love story and acknowledges, or exposes, the slave-master relationship, the inevitable component in the love bond that permeates this most intimate experience and thereby perpetuates female inferiority.