



Women Issuing P'sak Halachah

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May women teach Jewish law, according to Halachah? May they make rulings on the laws of Shabbat and prayer? May they issue a *heter*? An *issur*? Would it be possible for women to teach other women *halachot* pertaining to women – like *marot* and other issues tied to family purity?

Giving information to those who wish to know the word of God, which is *halachah*, is a core part of *p'sak halachah*. Accordingly, anyone who had studied *halachah* and knows it well may pass it on. This includes learned women who are Torah scholars and have been trained to *pasken*. Even when *p'sak halachah* requires making a judgment call and a ruling in uncertain circumstances, *poskim* throughout the generations determined that women are qualified to *pasken* (see *Ba'alei Hatsofot*, *Sefer Hachinuch*, and *Birkei Yosef*), as have chief rabbis of the State of Israel throughout history (like Rabbi Yitzhak Halevi Herzog and Rabbi Eliyahu Bakshi-Doron).

Nowadays, when the value of Torah learning is transmitted to women as well as men, this ruling carries special importance. Today, since we can now find women fervently studying the *Shas* and the *poskim*, while receiving *masoret* from Torah scholars, they may certainly *pasken*. This statement is particularly important when it comes to laws uniquely pertaining to women. By involving women well-versed in *halachah*, we can break down the barriers obstructing women who hesitate to ask questions, and consequently are often left in a state of doubt, causing them to either follow unneeded stringencies or actually transgress *halachah* (*Si'ah Nahum*). If women can make *halachic* rulings in women's matters, more women will observe the *halachah*, and to a greater extent – even those communities that would abandon *halachah* if women weren't to instruct it.

ELABORATION AND SOURCES

1. Good advice, and studying Torah

There is seemingly no reason for a woman who knows *halachah* not to *pasken*. Why would we prevent something good from occurring? After all, the *mitzvah* of loving one's fellow man as much as oneself requires us to give good advice as well¹. By sharing

¹ *Shulchan Aruch, Hoshen Misphat*, chapter 97, paragraph 1, and quotations from the Vilna Gaon, chapter 4 – *Ahavat Hesed* (Hafetz Haim), part 3, paragraph 7.



knowledge, and by sharing Torah knowledge in particular, we are performing great acts of kindness².

We could surmise that only those who were commanded to study Torah may *pasken*, as well, though no sources say so explicitly. Since the Talmud (*Tractate Kiddushin*, 29b) states that women are exempt from studying Torah, and others aren't commanded to teach them³, they may not have an obligation to *pasken*. They may not even be allowed to *pasken*. The *Shulchan Aruch* summarizes the status of women with regard to Torah study:

“A woman who studied Torah receives a reward, but not the same reward as a man [who studied], because she was not one who was commanded and performed [the commandments].”⁴

However, the *poskim* were referring to women's obligation to study the *halachot* concerned with practical matters of everyday life. After all, if women weren't to study, how would they perform those *halachot*? At any rate, a woman is obligated to study laws concerning women⁵. This obligation is considered a genuine *mitzvah*⁶, as the *poskim*⁷ stated in an elucidation on the obligation to bless the Torah⁸. Thus, when it comes to

² Babylonian Talmud, *Tractate Sanhedrin* 91b: “One who prevents a student from learning *halachah* is likened to one who robbed the student of the inheritance of his forefathers.” See also *Ahavat Hesed*, part 3, chapter 8: “Torah matters, i.e. the Torah that we teach others is an act of kindness. ... and as we read in *Tractate Sukkah* 49: *What is the meaning of “she opened her mouth with wisdom, and had the teachings of kindness on her tongue? Torah that is taught is the Torah of kindness.”*

³ *Tractate Kiddushin* 29b also states the following: “one whom others are commanded to teach is commanded to teach oneself; and the one whom others are not commanded to teach, is not commanded to teach oneself. How then do we know that others are not commanded to teach her? — Because it is written: ‘And you shall teach them your sons’ — but not your daughters.” See also Maimonides' commentary in footnote 12.

⁴ *Shulchan Aruch*, *Yoreh De'ah*, chapter 246, paragraph 6.

⁵ *Ibid*, chapter 241.

⁶ There were, however, those who doubted the definitiveness of this commandment. See the *Birchei Yosef* on *Orach Chaim*, chapter 47, paragraph 7.

⁷ *Beit Yosef*, in the name of the Samak, chapter 47, paragraph 14. The *Pri Megadim*, as related in *Be'ur Halachah*, chapter 47, writes that women, therefore, may fulfill men's obligation to say this *brachah*.

⁸ *Shulchan Aruch*, *Orach Chaim*, chapter 47, paragraph 14: “Women make the blessing over the Torah”.



halachot concerning women, men and women share the same obligation to study Torah⁹, and consequently, there's no reason to prevent women from instructing others on *halachah*.

In recent generations, *halachic* sages have expanded the range of subjects that they felt women and girls should or must study to include areas beyond those tied to the fulfillment of their *halachic* obligation to observe *mitzvot* (see appendix). So women who have also studied the remaining subjects in the Torah and are well versed in these fields can indeed instruct them. However, not all kinds of *Torah* instruction are limited to transferring information. There are types of instruction that require making judgment calls and tough decisions¹⁰. The next section will discuss an unequivocal *heter* voiced by both the *rishonim* and *achronim*, which lets women to instruct any Torah subject.

2. Instruction¹¹

The question of whether a woman may serve as a *dayyan* is similar, yet distinct from the issue of Torah instruction. *Dayyanot* are public servants, and their role carries authority, so the *poskim* held varying opinions over whether a woman may serve as a *dayyanit*¹². The *rishonim* discussed this question in the context of the prophetess Deborah¹³:

⁹ However, see *Beit Levi Responsa*, part 1, which distinguishes between a woman's obligation to study Torah, which is a prerequisite, and is less binding than the obligation to perform the *mitzvot*, and men's obligation to study Torah, which is, in itself, the final goal of the *mitzvah*. See also the *Tzitz Eliezer Responsa*, part 9, chapter 3.

¹⁰ See the example in *Tractate Sanhedrin*, chapter 5, and its implications for training candidates for rabbinical ordination. See also *Dibrot Moshe, Shabbat*, chapter 10, pp. 123-140 on the meaning and validity of *halachic* instruction.

¹¹ After writing this document, we discovered a comprehensive article entitled "Orthodox Women Rabbis? Tentative Thoughts that distinguish Between the Timely and the Timeless" (Broyde, Michael J. and Brody, Shlomo D). The article deals with similar topics.

¹² The main dispute is between Miamonides, who prohibits women from serving as *dayyanot*, and several of the *Ba'alei Hatosfot*, who allow this under certain conditions. See also the conclusion reached by the *Shulchan Aruch* in *Choshen Mishpat*, chapter 7. Much has been written about this *halachah*. For example, see "Women and the Seat of Judgment" by Aliza Beck (2002)– an analysis of the sources of this *halachah* and an assessment based on *psika* throughout history. See also a recent article published by Idit Bar Tov in *Ma She'elatech Esther Vate'as* (5774), entitled "May a woman serve as a *dayyanit*" (pp. 37-65).

¹³ See, for example, the sentence in *Tosfot Tractate Niddah* 50a beginning with "Anyone who is qualified to judge: 'for there are women qualified to judge, as we



*Now Deborah was a woman prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth; **she judged Israel at that time.** And she sat under the palm tree of Deborah, between Ramah and Beth-el, in the mountain of Ephriam; **and the children of Israel came up to her for judgment.**¹⁴*

Given this precedent, some *Ba'alei Hatosfot* believed that a woman is allowed to judge. According to other opinions, Deborah's position was exceptional¹⁵. In one of the commentaries of the *Tosefot*, it says as follows:

[And Deborah] did not judge, she would only teach the law¹⁶.

We can deduce that a woman may teach *halachah* (see *Chosen Mishpat*), just as Deborah had done, even if she can't serve as a *dayyanit*. We also learn this from *Sefer Hahinuch*, which discusses the prohibition of instructing Torah when one is inebriated:

find with regard to Deborah: '... she judged Israel at that time.' The *Meiri*, in his comments on *Tractate Kiddushin* 35, states that this is the position of *Ba'alei Hatosfot*. This is also the opinion taken by the *Ritba* on *Tractate Kiddushin* 35.

¹⁴ *Judges* 4: 5,6.

¹⁵ Since here, a "judge" signifies a "leader", not a "judge" (in the classic sense), according to the commentary of Rashba on *Tractate Shavuot* 30a, the Ran on the Rif's commentary on *Tractate Shavuot* 13a. According to others (*Tosefot Tractate Yebamot* 45b: "Whoever had not immersed..."), Deborah was a prophetess, and we can't deduce this from Deborah's precedent because she was a prophetess – she had heard the word of God." ; or perhaps that those who were judged, or the entire public, accepted her as a *dayyanit* (Rashba on *Tractate Shavuot* 30a and the Ran on the Rif's commentary on *Tractate Gittin* 49b). *Ba'alei Hatosfot* added that it was because she was a prophetess (*Tosefot* on *Tractate Gittin* 48b: "and not before common men..."; *Tractate Bava Kama* 15a: "Which shall place..."; *Tractate Shavuot* 29b: "The oath of testimony...". See also *Aruch Lener* on *Tractate Niddah* 50a: "And the Ran offered a solution..."

¹⁶ *Tractate Niddah* 50a: "All who are qualified ...", see also parallels in tractates *Gittin* and *Shavuot*; see also the Mordechai on *Tractate Yevamot*, chapter 36. In *Tractate Yevamot*, the text reads: "she teaches them, so they may judge...". The Rosh on *Tractate Shavuot*, part 3, chapter 2 takes a similar tone. This means that Deborah did not make the final ruling, though she knew what the judgment should be. Therefore, the *dayyanim* sat in front of her, she told them the judgment, and they would repeat her words. The ruling was determined by what these *dayyanim* repeated. This is similar to what the Talmud says about a Cohen that sees blemishes (from leprosy).



*Anyone, a Kohen, a Levite or an Israelite, who instructs Torah when inebriated, has violated a negative commandment, regardless of [whether this] person had become intoxicated from wine or from other types of spirits. This prohibition applies to men at all times and in all places, **and it also applies to wise women who are fit to instruct**. Any great sage whose instructions are relied upon by other people may not teach his pupils while inebriated, since his teaching is likened to instruction, as we mentioned earlier¹⁷.*

Rav Hachida, in the spirit of the *rishonim*, ruled as follows: “Even if a woman may not pass judgment, a wise woman may, in any case, instruct *halachah*.”¹⁸ This is how the chief rabbis of Israel ruled as well¹⁹. In an open letter on teaching women Torah, Rabbi Yitzhak Nissim wrote the following:

¹⁷ *Mitzvah* 152.

¹⁸ As he wrote in his book, *Birkei Yosef (Part two)* on *Choshen Mishpat*, chapter 7, paragraph 12. He was quoted in *Pithei Teshuva Choshen Mishpat*, chapter 7, paragraph 5. However, in my humble opinion, the excerpt in *Sha'arei Teshuva (Orach Chaim 461:100:17 – or 461:10:5 in today's version)* referenced by *Pithei Teshuva*, which implies a dispute with Hachida, also referenced by Rabbi Riskin in the article mentioned in the next footnote (others referenced it as well), believing that a woman can't be permitted to instruct *halachah*, can't be considered evidence of a dispute, in any way. In the case referenced there, the woman in question isn't a scholar. The author of *Sha'arei Teshuvah* rules out the interpretation that the *posek* had ostensibly absolved himself of responsibility by delegating the authority for instruction to members of his family. Similarly, when the Magen Avraham (in his commentary on the *Orach Chaim*, 263:12) mentions the *chiddush* made by Bila, who was married to the man who stated “there is no wisdom in women”, Rabbi Shem Tov Gagin, in his book *Keter Shem Tov*, part one (1998) p. 177, says: “this is the case for women in general, but it is not the case for learned women, and we see this from the case of the daughters of Tzelafhad.” Therefore, no one had explicitly and methodically disputed what Birkei Yosef said.

¹⁹ This is what we find in *Yafeh Lalev*, part 7 on *Choshen Mishpat*, chapter 2, in the book's second commentary on the *midrash* that related that Miriam had instructed the women: “... she would teach the *halachot*, both prohibitions and leniencies, because she was a learned woman, according to all opinions.” The same is referenced in *Halacha Pesukah* (5746), chapter 7, paragraph 9, p. 95; see also Steinberg, Rabbi M., *Hilchot Nashim* (5741) 21:2, p. 118; this is also the direction Rabbi Riskin takes in his article, “Women as instructors of *halachah*”, in *Ayin Tova, Du Si'ah Vepulmus Betarbut Yisrael* (5759), pp. 698-704); likewise, Rabbi D. Shwerber published an article on whether a woman can become a *halachic* instructor on the “Kolech” website (published in 5769). Rabbi. A. Hamami also rules this way in the *Minhat Avraham Responsa on Choshen Mishpat*, chapter 29, p. 305:



... and during the generation of the rishonim, many girls studied Torah. Some were great Torah sages indeed, and some had even published chidushim and halachic rulings. Some of the literature written by the rishonim and the achronim contains chidushim, including solutions to halachic questions, referring back to the women who proposed those chidushim and solutions.²⁰

In his discussion on the cognitive abilities of women, Rabbi Yitzhak Halevi Herzog also implies that this *halachah* is simple and accepted.

... since it is accepted that a woman is fit to instruct halachah ... this includes all halachic matters, simple or difficult, great or small. And if she is fit to instruct, we can't determine that a woman's opinion is feeble ... in any case, if [a woman] is fit [to instruct], this teaches us that she can think clearly.²¹

In the summary of his response on women's and converts' authority and leadership, Rabbi Bakshi-Doron states the following:

From all we have heard, it seems to me that a woman and a convert may serve as leaders, and they may even serve as the leaders of their generation ... a woman and a convert may be instructors of halachah and they may teach Torah and psakim. [These are] roles whose authority is determined through the abilities of the candidates, and this authority is derived from their abilities...²²

3. Instruction on *Halachot* Pertaining to Women

If women may instruct *halachah* on all matters, we need to have women instructing other women on *halachah*. The possibility of a woman giving *halachic* advice opens new, and

"we are constantly dealing with this thought. A learned woman whose G-d-fearing nature overshadows her wisdom, upon whom our rabbis will bear testimony, and give her the authority so that she is qualified to instruct *halachah* – this woman is permitted, a priori, to instruct *halachah*, whether she had learned it from a book, or inferred it from a precedent, and her words are no different than those of a man. And the prophetesses Miriam, Deborah, and Huldah... and Bruriah, Eshet Haprisha, Mirkada will all bear testimony to this... and may the Rock of Israel save us from our errors, and show us great things from His Torah, amen, may it be His will..."

²⁰ Published in *Akdamot*, volume 13 (5763), pp. 55-56, by Yael Levin, who even added a historical and analytical introduction to this discussion.

²¹ *Techukeh Leyisrael Al Pi Hatorah*, volume 1 (5749), p. 109. His answer relies on what was written in *Pitchei Teshuva*, which was referenced earlier, in footnote 18.

²² *Sefer Binyan Av*, part one, response 65 (p. 287).



even exclusive channels for *halachic* instruction. This is how T. Ganzel describes the advantages of turning to a female *halachic* advisor:

The field of halachah that lends itself most naturally to instruction by women is the laws of family purity. First, the halachot in this field are primarily addressed to women. It is the women who understand these matters first hand. They are more experienced, and moreover, this area of halachah calls for a certain measure of modesty, and this is why women prefer to consult with other women on such matters... sometimes, it is the openness and honesty typical of a woman-to-woman encounter that enables this dialog... a woman advisor is also more available to other women, or to couples who find it impossible to contact a rabbi to discuss these issues, yet are prepared – sometimes enthusiastically so – to get halachic advice from a woman²³.

Chances are that a woman who contacts a female *halachic* advisor can expect to meet someone who understands precisely what she is asking, and that this encounter will be more open. This option would consequently increase the number of women seeking advice, since many women don't feel comfortable asking rabbis about women's issues, and some take on extra stringencies, or leniencies, without a *halachic* base. This is why female *halachic* advisors are so crucial. Rabbi N. Rabinovich also considers availability for clarifying a *halachic* decision an argument in favor of training female *halachic* advisors.²⁴

In our modern day, many woman don't contact rabbis regarding [menstrual] bloodstains fearing they would transgress the prohibition 'lo titganeh' (not appearing ugly to their husbands), and this leads to many pitfalls.

Rabbi Rabinovich summarizes as follows:

²³ T. Ganzel, *Haposek, Harav Vehotzet Hahalacha* (the posek, the rabbi, and the *halachic* advisor), *Rabbanut Ha'etgar*, (2011), pp. 619, 622, 633. This is also the opinion of Rabbanit M. Piotrkovsky, as expressed in her book, *Mehalechet Kedarka* (2014): "The importance of this initiative [training female *halachic* advisors on the laws of *niddah*] is unequalled, as it lets every woman ... discuss intimate *halachic* issues with women, and not men [...] and they become set on the path of the *halachah*." This claim is well substantiated by the practical description in pages 76–78 of the book. It seems that any *halachic* instructor dealing with these issues senses how difficult it is for some women to approach a rabbi directly to discuss them. To learn more about the reality of female *halachic* advisors, see Tova Ganzel and Deena Rachel Zimmerman, "Women as Halachic Professionals: The Role of Yo'atzot Halacha", *Nashim* 22, (2011) pp. 162-171.

²⁴ *Si'ah Nahum*, chapter 60.



I have great esteem for rabbis who have created educational settings for female halachic advisors and instructed those women in common halachot, while teaching them to identify subjects requiring further consultation with a Torah scholar²⁵. These rabbis have delegated these women with the authority to instruct halachah to other women, thus solving many problems. Since they have been given this authority, these advisors no longer need to fear that they would violate the honor of other Torah sages by instructing halachah, just as any instructor of halachah that has become accepted by the community is allowed to instruct halachah after securing permission from his rabbis.

4. The Halachic Horizons of Women Issuing P'sakim

Alongside the need to clarify the *halachah* in principle, we should also assess the standards women must achieve to be qualified in *halachic* instruction. In other words, what determines if a scholarly man or woman may instruct *halachah*? The Talmud, in its treatment of this matter, presents us with dilemma:

...for R. Abbahu declared that R. Huna said in the name of Rab, What means that which is written: For she has cast down many wounded, yea, all her slain are a mighty host?

'For she hath cast down many wounded' — this refers to a disciple who has not attained the qualification to decide questions of law and yet decides them;

'yea, all her slain are a mighty host' — this refers to a disciple who has attained the qualification to decide questions of law and does not decide them.²⁶

Thus one instructs *halachah* though unqualified to do disrupts the natural order of the world, while those who are qualified but miss the opportunity to instruct *halachah* are also contributing to the world's destruction.

By bringing women into the fold of Torah and *halachah* scholars, as well as involving them in *halachic* instruction, we open a window to new challenges and horizons. The number and quality of *Halachic* instructors would increase. We must also take care to preserve the standard of quality needed for *halachic* instruction, and to ensure unity in the *halachic* world, so that the Torah doesn't become ambiguous. For this to happen, we'll need to expand the Torah education provided to female *halachic* instructors, nurture

²⁵ Tractate Sotah, 22b.



communication and consultation channels with others in the world of Torah instruction, and introduce some type of certification testing.

Rabbi Yosef Cohen, the son of Rabbi Joshua Falk (the author of *Sefer Hadrisha Al Hatur*), offers us words of advice to guide us on our path:

My mother, Bila, of blessed memory ... she should be honored, and this book should mention some of the things she did which we should keep in mind as we educate future generations, so that all Jewish women can learn from her actions and act accordingly ... [my mother] held the key to the women's section of the synagogue. She was the first to arrive, and she would remain at the synagogue several hours after everyone else had left ... she would concern herself with studying the daily section of the weekly Torah portion, with Rashi's commentary, as well as other commentaries ... always, when they would grace the Shabbat table with divrei torah, my mother would muster her courage, like any man, and participate in the volley of divrei torah herself. She would sometimes invent a tender pshat as sweet as honey, and she was especially knowledgeable on matters of women and hilchot niddah, almost as much as any halachic instructor ... and so, she would constantly consecrate her heart and soul to learn the inner workings of the Torah.

APPENDIX

The Status of Teaching Women Torah in the Modern Day

We should take note of the breadth and intensity of the change that has occurred in the past several generations in how *halachah* relates to teaching women Torah. While early *poskim* express reservations over teaching women Torah, many more recent *poskei hador* maintain that today, as part of the social and cultural change transpiring around the world, and in order to cope with its reservations, we are encouraged, and even required, to teach girls and women Torah:

... and there is no basis today for the fear of violating a prohibition of teaching one's daughter Torah²⁷. Many great Torah sages have agreed that educational

²⁷ For the letter that Rabbi Yisrael Meir Hacoen of Radin (the Chafetz Chaim) wrote on the institution of the "Beis Yakov" schools for girls in 5693, see *Chafetz Chaim Upo'alo*, part 3, p. 1113. His opinion corresponds to a comment he made in *Likutei Halachot* on *Tractate Sotah*, part 3, which distinguishes between the earlier generations, when teaching Torah to girls was forbidden, and later generations, when Torah study became a way of saving these girls from the danger of veering off of the path of God. The Chafetz Chaim's statements formed the basis for Haredi



*institutions for women should teach girls other Torah subjects (beyond those pertaining to halachot that they must observe) ... and this is a good thing... they should continue doing so...*²⁸

*In modern times, when [women] study general subjects so fervently, as is necessary, why should we limit their knowledge of Torah?*²⁹

schools and the various Torah subjects taught in them. See, for example, the response given by Rabbi Aharon Wolkin, one of the great *poskim* from *Agudat Yisrael*, who lived during the first half of the 20th century, in his book *Zkan Aharon* (ed. 2) on *Yoreh De'ah*, chapter 66. He was convinced that a donation earmarked for Torah study could be given to a Beis Yakov school for girls, since **“the Beis Yakov is certainly no less holy than a Talmud Torah, since this is the very essence of Torah study.”** Rabbi Wolkin found that the value of these institutions is expressed in the Torah study within them, and in the Jewish spirit that envelops them and guards them against the scourges of society and the spirit of apostasy. In a similar vein, Rabbi Zalman Sorotzkin, who headed Agudat Yisrael’s panel of Torah sages, wrote his responsa in his book, *Moznayim Lemishpat*, chapter 42: “Not only are we allowed to **teach Torah** and reverence of God **to girls, in our day and age – we are totally compelled** to do so.” We should mention here that not all of the rabbis of this sector of society agreed with his *heter*, or agreed that it was a *mitzvah*. See *Shevet Halevi*, part 6, chapter 103; *Divrei Yetziv Yoreh Da’at* 139, and the dispute and rebuke in *Tzitz Eli’ezer*, part 10, chapter 8.

²⁸ Rabbi M. M. Schneerson, the last Chabad Rebbe, *Shulchan Menachem*, part 4, chapter 75. The traditional Chabad viewpoint encourages teaching Torah to women, and this includes the Oral Law and the Talmud. For more on this, see: Handelman, Susan, “Women and the study of Torah in the thought of the Lubavitcher Rebbe: Jewish Legal Writings by Women (1998) 143-178.”

²⁹ Rabbi H.D. Halevi, *Aseh Lecha Rav*, part 2, chapter 52. Rabbi M. Malka, who was part of the Chief Rabbinate, references this book in his responsa on *Yoreh Deah* (*Mikveh Mayim*, part 3, paragraph 21): “In modern times, when women play such a large role in our way of life, are found in great numbers at our universities, manage offices and run businesses, they also have a role to play in the leadership of the country and in politics ... there certainly ... is no prohibition on teaching women the Oral Law... Not only that, it is our duty to engorge them with Torah study, to the best of our ability. Reality has shown that every woman who has studied Torah and *halachah* in a religious school is cautious and quick about educating her daughters in religion, in Judaism, and she also guides her husband down the correct path, maintains family purity, and preserves a kosher kitchen and dinner table. Should we then, fearing that women may misinterpret Torah, forego all of the positive effects of this study? Likewise, the Rishon Letzion, Rabbi M. Eliyahu, writes, in the *Ma’amar Mordechai Responsa on Yoreh De’ah*, chapter 11: “the *ahronim* already wrote that in our modern day, a woman may study Torah, both written and oral ... a teacher is



*We should, and we must provide our daughters with intensive education that includes sources from the Oral Torah. This isn't just an optional step.*³⁰

A tradition recounted from a discussion with Rabbi Soloveichik's emphasizes the important of teaching women Torah, and the change that has occurred in our generation:

Even if teaching women the Oral Torah was once forbidden, today, when woman are on par with men both in the academic world and in matters of determining policy, and when women won't agree to follow the strictures of the Torah if they don't understand these matters themselves, by learning the sources in the Gemara and the Pentateuch, we must permit them to study the Oral Torah... The rabbi [Rabbi Soloveichik] explained that complex problems arise in our technical world and if our daughters don't study the fundamentals of the Torah, from the Pentateuch and the Gemara, including the commentaries of the rishonim, our genuine Judaism may, God forbid, cease to exist. It's now time for "women to come and hear", and then, we'll witness the realization of the end of the verse in parashat Vayakhel: "and they will observe to do all of the words of this Torah"³¹.

Rabbi Y. H. Henkin was committed to this position:

... and women who are well-versed in secular subjects yet ignorant of Judaism reduce the words of the Torah to rubbish, feeling that the words of our Torah are trivial, God forbid, when compared to other types of knowledge. Therefore, the time has come to expand their knowledge of Torah, to the extent that halachah permits it... and those zealots who would prohibit them from studying the Oral Torah are contributing to ignorance, in my view, and their zeal is devotion to nonsense, since it causes Jewish women to run astray, rachamanah litzlan³².

allowed to teach them... and the reason for this is that in the modern day, women are not holed up in their homes, as they had been in the past, and it would be better for them to study holy matters than to read misinterpretations and forbidden texts."

³⁰ Rabbi A. Lichtenstein, *Ba'ayot Yesod Behinucha Shel Ha'isha, Ha'isha Vehinucha* (5740), p. 158. At the end of the text, Rabbi Lichtenstein states: "we should step up girls' Torah study, both qualitatively and quantitatively, while instructing them in all of the subjects of the Torah ... I have no qualms with teaching girls Gemara ... this should even be institutionalized as an essential part of studies at school – as a veritable course. This is how I educate my daughter, and this is how my wife was educated. To me, this seems to be the best way for the girls of our generation.

³¹ Rabbi M. Mozeson of Passaic, NJ, *Hinuch Habanot, Hadarom* (journal), pp. 66-67 (Elul 5758), pp. 65-66.

³² *Bnei Ahim Responsa*, part 3, the end of chapter 12 (p. 48).