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{ TOPIC }

Teaching Torah to Women



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► Each issue reviews a different area of contemporary *halacha* with an emphasis on practical applications of the principles discussed. Significant time is spent ensuring the inclusion of all relevant *shittos* on each topic, as well as the *psak* of *Harav Yisroel Belsky, Shlita* on current issues.

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Teaching Torah to Women

Although throughout the ages there were Jewish women who were learned and revered¹ the concept of formal education for women is barely a century old.² Before this time, they would learn whatever was necessary from their parents.³ Girls generally did not go out of the home, and were often illiterate.⁴ The modern school system teaches many subjects to the girls, including Chumash, Halachah, Navi and Mishnah. Some even teach Gemara.⁵ Girls learn Chumash in depth with Ramban, and study more halachah than boys in yeshivah.⁶ The Bais Yaakov movement was spearheaded by Sarah Schenirer with just twenty-five girls in 1917,⁷ as a

1 See *Maseches Bava Basra* 119; *Pesachim* 62b; *Sanhedrin* 94b; *Tosafos, Maseches Niddah* 49b "kol." Refer to *Tradition* 17:3, page 79.

2 An entire book entitled "*And All Your Children Shall Be Learned*" is devoted to Women and the Study of Torah in Jewish Law and History.

3 The girls would stay in the home until age 12-14 and then get married. These girls would be grandparents by thirty years old. In the olden days girls did not need to learn Torah since they were good-hearted but things changed as they got influenced by outside factors. See *Aruch Hashulchan, Y.D.* 246:20.

4 Refer to *Emes L'Yaakov, Y.D.* 246. See *Beis Avi* 4:142; *Chinuch Yisrael* 2, page 647, footnote 3.

5 Such is the practice in Yeshiva of Flatbush, Ramaz, YU for girls, and Maimonides in Boston (see *Tradition* 17:3, pages 80-81). See *Tradition* 28:3, pages 5-38 in depth. Some women even finish *Shas* today.

6 This is an odd phenomenon since boys learn much more than girls but most is not focused on *halachah l'ma'aseh* (Harav Herschel Shachter *shlit"u*).

7 In the years 1840-1855, in the United States, education was the responsibility of the synagogues, since the Jews feared the teaching of Christianity in the public-school system (*And All Your Children Shall Be Learned* page 244). In 1908 when there were almost two million Jews in the United States, of whom probably three-quarters were eastern European immigrants and their children, only about 28 percent of the Jewish children of school age were receiving any form

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reaction to many factors⁸ which had changed the status quo.⁹ Since then, hundreds of girls' schools have been created.¹⁰

Introduction

In this article, we will discuss today's practice of teaching Torah to women. We will address what is permitted to be taught, whether it makes a difference if she learns herself, and whether this is considered learning Torah. These and other questions will be dealt with below.¹¹

Source

The *pasuk* says, *V'limaditem osam es b'neichem*,¹² you shall teach them to your sons. The Gemara¹³ infers from the word "*b'neichem*" that there is no mitzvah to teach Torah to a daughter.¹⁴

The opinion of many *poskim* is that women are exempt

of religious education, and a quarter of these were in the almost useless Sunday schools (*And All Your Children Shall Be Learned* page 246).

8 One factor was the fact that Jewish girls were not getting a Torah education but rather allowed to go to secular schools. Therefore, they started leaving the fold (see *Tradition* 17:3, pages 78-79; *Great Jewish Women*; *Beis Avi* 4:142). See *Chinuch Yisrael* 2, pages 646-647.

9 For more on this fascinating topic see ArtScroll's book entitled *Judaoscope "Sarah Schenirer: The Mother of Generations."* Also see *Great Jewish Women* pages 244-245; *Tradition* 28:1, pages 29-31. By the time Sarah Schenirer died in 1935 there were close to 300 Bais Yaakov schools in Poland with a student population of 35,585 (Refer to *And All Your Children Shall Be Learned* pages 280-281). With the young girls learning Torah, this in turn made many of the previously non-religious parents into *frum* Jews in the USA in the 1900s.

10 In 1948 in the USA there were only two girls' schools. Shulamis School was started in the 1920s. Stern College for girls started in 1954.

11 Refer to *Ohr Yisrael* 8, pages 27-56. See *Chayei Moshe, Y.D.* 1:10.

12 *Devarim* 11:19.

13 *Maseches Kiddushin* 29b; see *Maseches Kiddushin* 34a, Rashi "mah," *Tosafos "gavra"; Tosafos, Maseches Shabbos* 32b "mikra."

14 See Rashi, *Maseches Kiddushin* 29b "d'lo."

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from learning Torah.¹⁵ Women also do not have an obligation to teach their sons Torah.¹⁶

Reason

One possible reason is that the woman is the mainstay of the home. If she were obligated to learn Torah, she could not fulfill her critical role of running the home and raising the children.¹⁷

Women Who Learn

Although women do not have a mitzvah to learn Torah, they may choose to learn, and will be rewarded like any other mitzvah which they perform voluntarily.¹⁸ More importantly, they are rewarded for enabling their husband and children to learn Torah.¹⁹

Sources Against Women Learning

The Mishnah²⁰ maintains that teaching women Torah is like teaching them “*tiflos*,” frivolousness.²¹ The Mishnah does not clarify this comment. The Gemara²² explains that learning Torah can cause a person to become cunning.²³ This

15 *Rosh*, *Maseches Kiddushin* 1:42; *Rif* page 12a; *Rambam*, *Hilchos Talmud Torah* 1:1; *Shulchan Aruch* 246:6; *Smag*, *Asei* 12. Whether one may pay for girls' school with *ma'aser* money see *Igros Moshe*, *Y.D.* 2:113; *Beis Avi* 1:99.

16 *Maseches Kiddushin* 29b; *Rambam*, *Hilchos Talmud Torah* 1:1; *Kesef Mishnah*.

17 Refer to *V'ein Lamo Michshol* 7, page 315, footnote 1. See *Mekor Baruch* 4, pages 1965-1972.

18 *Rambam*, *Hilchos Talmud Torah* 1:13; *Tur*, *Y.D.* 246; *Shulchan Aruch*, *Y.D.* 246:6.

19 *Rema*, *Y.D.* 246:6. See *Maseches Brachos* 17a.

20 *Sotah* 20a. See *Maseches Sotah* 21b.

21 *Tiferes Yisrael*, *Maseches Sotah* 3:4; *Shulchan Aruch*, *Y.D.* 246:6. See *Lechem Mishnah*, *Hilchos Talmud Torah* 1:13. Others say *tiflos* means nonsense (*Lechem Mishnah* *ibid*; see *Journal of Halachah and Contemporary Society* 9, page 22). Refer to *Hadorom* 61, pages 15-16 why the *Shulchan Aruch* did not use the language of *assur*. Also see *Bnei Banim* 3:12.

22 *Maseches Sotah* 21b.

23 See *Rashi*, *Maseches Sotah* 21b “*k'eilo*.” Refer to *Maharsha*, *Maseches Sotah* 21b why we are not concerned of this by men who learn Torah (women are weak minded). See *Talmud Yerushalmi*,

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is brought in halachah as well.²⁴ The reason for this is that women were not learned for the most part and they would not know how to handle the knowledge of Torah²⁵ since Torah *Sheb'al Peh* is deep with reasons and *sevaros*.²⁶

It is noteworthy that the Torah Temimah²⁷ argues that this concept only applies to a girl under age twelve. Once she is older, she will be able to concentrate on what she learns.

Torah Sheb'ksav vs. Torah Sheb'al Peh

The Rambam²⁸ says that the concept that women who learn Torah is like teaching them “*tiflos*” applies to *Torah Sheb'al Peh* (Mishnah, Gemara, etc.).²⁹ Ideally, one should not teach them *Torah Sheb'ksav* (Torah, *Nevi'im*) either, but if one did then it is not considered *tiflos*.³⁰ The restriction is limited to learning it in depth, but learning basic *Torah Sheb'ksav* is permitted.³¹

The Tur maintains that the main restriction applies to *Torah Sheb'ksav*.³² *Torah Sheb'al Peh* is permitted.³³ This is the exact opposite of the Rambam above; nonetheless, the main

Sotah 3:4. Refer to *Shulchan Aruch*, Y.D. 246:6; *Torah Temimah*, *Devarim* 11:48. For more on this see *Tzitz Eliezer* 10:9.

24 *Bach*, Y.D. 246; *Tur*; *Shulchan Aruch*, Y.D. 246:6; *Birchei Yosef* 7.

25 See *Tiferes Yisrael*, *Maseches Sotah* 3:4.

26 See *Torah Temimah*, *Devarim* 11:48.

27 *Devarim* 11:48. See *Hadorom* 12, pages 15-17. Refer to *Mekor Baruch* 4, page 982.

28 *Hilchos Talmud Torah* 1:13.

29 See *Gra*, O.C. 47:14.

30 *Shulchan Aruch*, Y.D. 246:6. See *Kesef Mishnah*, *Hilchos Talmud Torah* 1:13; *Aruch Hashulchan*, Y.D. 246:19. Refer to *Maseches Chagigah* 3a; *Nedarim* 35b; *Tosafos*, *Maseches Sotah* 21b “ben.”

31 *Taz*, Y.D. 246:4. Refer to *Tzitz Eliezer* 9:6. See *Ohr Yisrael* 8, pages 52-53; *Mishnah Yosef* 6:15 which says even on the simple level of *Torah Sheb'ksav* they are only permitted to learn what is relevant to them. See *Gra*, O.C. 47:14.

32 See *Prisha*, Y.D. 246:16.

33 See *ibid*.

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opinion is like the Rambam.³⁴ It is interesting to point out that the Shulchan Aruch Harav does not mention an *issur* of women to learn *Torah Sheb'ksav*. Nevertheless, it would still be forbidden in depth.³⁵

The Tur explains that most women can't handle Torah since their minds are not fit for it.³⁶ This is brought by others as well.³⁷

Women Showing Interest

If a woman wants to learn by herself,³⁸ then she is showing interest and then it is permitted.³⁹ The Prisha⁴⁰ explains that she is taken out of the category of "most" women (see above) who can't handle it and it is permitted. This is brought by others as well.⁴¹ It is difficult to learn alone, and if she is willing to devote herself to this, she will not come to cunning behavior.⁴²

Accordingly, a curriculum of learning Torah would be permitted in a girls' school.⁴³

It can be argued that this devotion would permit *Torah Sheb'al Peh* as well.⁴⁴

34 *Kesef Mishnah, Hilchos Talmud Torah* 1:13; *Beis Yosef, Y.D.* 246; *Aruch Hashulchan* 19. See *Bach, Y.D.* 246.

35 See *Tzitz Eliezer* 9:6. Refer to *Tov Ayin* 4.

36 *Y.D.* 246. See *Torah Temimah, Devarim* 11:48. Refer to *Meiri, Maseches Sotah* 20a.

37 *Shulchan Aruch, Y.D.* 246:6.

38 Included in this can perhaps be women learning with a *chavrusa* (see *Hadorom* 61, page 12).

39 *Prisha, Y.D.* 246:15; *Asei Lecha Rav* 2:52; *Tzitz Eliezer* 9:6; *Hadorom* 61, page 12; *Bnei Banim* 3:12; *Mishneh Halachos* 10:161. See *Shevet Halevi* 8:211. Also see *Shevet Halevi* 6:150; *Teshuvos V'hanhagos* 4:288.

40 *Y.D.* 246:15.

41 *Torah Temimah, Devarim* 11:48. See *Ohr Yisrael* 9, pages 206-207. Refer to *Shevet Halevi* 8:211.

42 See *Ohr Yisrael* 8, page 54.

43 *Noam* 12, page 81.

44 *Tzitz Eliezer* 9:6. See *Journal of Halachah and Contemporary Society* 9, page 42; *Hadorom* 61,

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Learned Women

Throughout the ages there existed women who were learned and righteous.⁴⁵ Some examples are Sarah, Rivkah, Rochel, Leah, Yocheved, Miriam, Devorah, the wife of Manoach, and Chanah.⁴⁶ Bruryah⁴⁷ learned 300 *halachos* from 300 different rabbis. We find that the grandmother of the Maharsha taught halachah to advanced students from behind a partition.⁴⁸ In more recent times, the wife of Harav Isser Zalman Meltzer *zt"l* edited her husband's work on the Rambam. There are also stories of interaction between the Mekor Baruch and Rayna Basya (daughter of Rav Yitzchak M'Volozhin).⁴⁹

Some say that these women were permitted to learn because they were self-motivated (see above).⁵⁰ Others say that they only learned relevant *halachos*.⁵¹

Halachos Relevant to Women

Although women should not be taught *Torah Sheb'al Peh*, they may learn or be taught the *halachos* which are relevant to them.⁵² This is especially important as detailed

pages 12-19; *Bnei Banim* 3:12. *Yalkut Yosef (Ishah)* pages 750-752; *Hisvadaas* 5750, 3, pages 173-175.

45 For a detailed discussion on this see *Mekor Baruch* 4, pages 978-980; *Ohr Yisrael* 8, pages 51-72 in depth; *Journal of Halachah and Contemporary Society* 9, page 25, footnote 16; *Noam* 12, pages 78-79.

46 See *Ohr Yisrael* 8, pages 57-58.

47 *Maseches Pesachim* 62b. See *Tosefta, Maseches Keilim (Bava Metzia)* 1:6; *Maharil* 199.

48 *Maharshal* 30.

49 *Mekor Baruch* 4, pages 975-976. On this see *Tradition* 35:1, pages 55-69 in great depth. Also see *And All Your Children Shall Be Learned* page 253. For more examples of learned women see *And All Your Children Shall Be Learned* pages 249-250.

50 Refer to *V'ein Lamo Michshol* 7, pages 318-320. See *Hadorom* 61, page 13; *Tradition* 17:3, pages 79-80.

51 Refer to *Shevet Hakehasi* 2:269.

52 *Bach, Y.D.* 246; *Prisha, Y.D.* 246:16; *Rema* 6; *Aruch Hashulchan* 19; *Yufei L'lev, Y.D.* 3:246:17-19; *Pele Yoetz, Chinuch; Igros Moshe, Y.D.* 2:109; *Zekan Aharon* 2:66; *Divrei Yoel, Y.D.* 84; *V'yoel Moshe*

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in the Mishnah⁵³ that an empty person cannot fear sin and an unlearned person cannot be a *chassid*. The custom was to have speeches for women on topics related to them.⁵⁴ The Aruch Hashulchan⁵⁵ maintains that the custom was for women to learn these *halachos* by heart and not from text.⁵⁶

The Sefer Chassidim⁵⁷ says that one needs to teach women relevant *halachos*.⁵⁸ If a woman does not learn *hilchos Shabbos*, how will she know what and what not to do? It is reported that Harav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld *zt"l* learned the *Orach Chaim* section of *Shulchan Aruch* with his wife for a half hour every day.⁵⁹

Relevant *halachos* include *Niddah*, *Tevilah*, *Yichud*, *Kashrus*, and *Melichah*⁶⁰ (not today since women don't do this at home). Also included are *mitzvos lo sa'asei* and *mitzvos asei* which are relevant to women,⁶¹ such as *Yom Tov*, *Tefillah*, *Birkas Hamazon*,⁶² *Hilchos Lashon Hara*, *Chessed*, *Tzedakah*, *Terumos* and *Ma'asros* and *Orlah* (in Eretz Yisrael), and *Challah*.⁶³ Clearly, the curriculum for a woman or girl can be quite comprehensive just from the relevant topics.

pages 436-438, 444; *Chinuch Yisrael* 2, page 489. Refer to *Divrei Yatziv*, *Y.D.* 139. See *Mishnah Berurah* 187:9. This is why women make *Birchos HaTorah*. See *Beis Yosef*, *O.C.* 47; *Shulchan Aruch*, *O.C.* 47:14; *Biur Halachah* "nashim"; *Aruch Hashulchan*, *O.C.* 47:25. See *Chorev* (Harav Samson Raphael Hirsch *zt"l*) 75. Refer to *Halichos Shlomo*, *Tefillah* 6:4, footnote 7; *V'yoel Moshe* pages 448-449; *Teshuvos V'hanhagos* 2:35. See *Gra*, *O.C.* 47:14.

53 *Maseches Avos* 2:6.

54 *Shulchan Aruch Harav*, *Hilchos Talmud Torah* 1:14.

55 *Y.D.* 246:19.

56 See *Shevet Halevi* 6:150.

57 313.

58 Refer to *Mikveh Hamayim* *Y.D.* 3:21.

59 *Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasah* 32:13.

60 See *Yehudah Ya'aleh*, *Y.D.* 1:48; *Hisvadaas* 5750, 3, pages 171-173.

61 *Shulchan Aruch Harav*, *Hilchos Talmud Torah* 1:14.

62 *Mishneh Halachos* 10:161.

63 *Shevet Halevi* 6:150; *Ohr Yisrael* 8, pages 24-27.

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Some maintain even these topics should not be learned in depth,⁶⁴ although there are others who disagree.

Women who learn the *halachos* which are applicable to them are not fulfilling the mitzvah of *talmud Torah* when learning it; rather, it is a precursor to know the mitzvah she is performing.⁶⁵

The Girls' School System

There are hundreds, if not thousands, of girls' schools today. How is it possible?⁶⁶

As mentioned above, the girls' school system was started by Sarah Schenirer.⁶⁷ It eventually led to the Bais Yaakov movement. Initially, there was opposition since it was a change from traditional education. The debate was moot after World War II when most of European Judaism was wiped out, and many parents were not alive to teach their daughters about their heritage. Another concern was that teaching girls Torah would lead to frivolous activities since maybe they would not be able to handle it, but now it is apparent that this is not the case and girls are more than willing and able to learn.⁶⁸ It is clear that learning Torah leads to more fear of Hashem, and it can be argued that perhaps the entire *issur* is no longer relevant. If so, teaching any of the Torah would be permitted for women (see below).⁶⁹

64 *Shevet Halevi* ibid.; *Ohr Yisrael* ibid.

65 *Birchei Yosef*, O.C. 47:7; *Bris Olam* (Chida) 313. Refer to *Lehoros Nassan* 6:88. See *V'ein Lamo Michshol* 7, page 317, footnote 4; *Mishnas Yosef* 6:15. Refer to *Journal of Halachah and Contemporary Society* 9, pages 36-38.

66 See *Ohr Yisrael* 8, pages 29-33.

67 Refer to *And All Your Children Shall Be Learned* pages 278-279 regarding the *Rabbonim* who backed the Bais Yaakov movement; *Moznaim LMishpat* 1:42.

68 Refer to *Zekan Aharon* 2:66. See *B'mechitzas Rabbeinu* page 36.

69 For more on this see *Ohr Yisrael* 8, pages 27-50 in great depth.



Today

As mentioned above, today's girls are highly educated, fill professional positions such as doctors and lawyers, and are thirsty for knowledge. The streets are also filled with secular objectives which are not meant for a Jewish girl.⁷⁰ As such, the fact is that a higher Jewish education must be offered to them. This was already discussed in the times of the Chafetz Chaim *zt"l*⁷¹, who wrote, "The entire *issur* mentioned above to teach girls Torah was in earlier days when all girls stayed close to their parents, and the family tradition was strong. However, today girls do not stay close to home, so it is an important mitzvah to teach girls Chumash, *Nevi'im*, *Kesuvim*, *Mussar* learned from *Chazal*, *Maseches Avos*, *Sefer Menoras Hama'or*, etc."⁷²

Others maintain that "most" women cannot handle Torah so they cannot learn. However, if girls show an interest and willingness to learn, then it is permitted for them to learn even *Torah Sheb'al Peh*. This is apparent from the fact that women today learn other areas of education in depth and are very studious about it.⁷³

Based on this logic, it is clear that the Chafetz Chaim did not permit something which was forbidden for years, but rather ruled that the *issur* does not apply to today's generation of girls; therefore, it is possible that even *Torah Sheb'al Peh* would be permitted as well.⁷⁴

The Satmar Rebbe said that the Chafetz Chaim's leniency is limited to *Torah Sheb'ksav*, which was originally not taught

70 See *ibid.* pages 31-33; *Teshuvos V'hanhagos* 5:68.

71 *Likutei Halachos, Maseches Sotah* 21a. See *Tzitz Eliezer* 9:6; *Ohr Yisrael* 34, page 129 quoting this as the opinion of the Chazon Ish *zt"l*; *Meikitz Nirdamim* pages 54-55.

72 See *Ohr Yisrael* 9, page 203-209; 11, pages 203-208. Refer to *Moznayim L'mishpat* 1:42; *Halichos Bas Yisrael* 9:6.

73 *Asei Lecha Rav* 2:52; *Mayim Chaim* 2:89; *Zekan Aharon* 2:66.

74 For more on this see *Ohr Yisrael* 8, page 55.

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to girls. This also includes relevant *halachos*, but learning explanations on Chumash is not permitted,⁷⁵ nor is *Torah Sheb'al Peh*.⁷⁶

Mussar

Included in permitted topics for women is *Mussar* such as *Maseches Avos*. This brings one to good *middos* etc.⁷⁷ It is reported that the Chasam Sofer learned lessons from *Chazal* with his daughters.⁷⁸ It is a good idea for girls to learn *Orchos Tzaddikim*.⁷⁹

Ramban on Chumash

The vast majority of girls' schools learn Chumash with Ramban in depth, as well as Rashi and other commentaries. Some say this is against halachah since this is considered *Torah Sheb'al Peh* and has no relevance to the girls, since it does not inspire them to have better *middos*. This would apply according to those who say even today girls can't learn *Torah Sheb'al Peh*.⁸⁰

According to the lenient opinions, it would be permitted. Additionally, some say that Ramban⁸¹ is considered *Torah Sheb'ksav*, as it can be considered lessons from *Chazal*.⁸²

75 See *Vaya'an Yosef* 1:142 about a *chassidishe* girl being taught in *Lashon Kodesh* versus Yiddish.

76 *V'yoel Moshe* pages 451-452; *Journal of Halachah and Contemporary Society* 9, pages 44-45. See *Tradition* 28:1, pages 82-93; *Otzros Yerushalayim* 11-20:212, page 163-172, 179-202 in depth. Refer to *The Satmar Rebbe* (biography) pages 164-165. See *Chinuch Yisrael* 2:7:4, page 487, 649.

77 *Igros Moshe*, Y.D. 3:87; *Shevet Halevi* 6:150.

78 *Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasah* 32:14.

79 *Orchos Tzaddikim* 1, page 194:21. See there where he maintains they should not learn *Chovos Halevavos*.

80 *Shevet Halevi* 6:150. See *Ohr Yisrael* 8, pages 55-56. The custom in Satmar is not to teach the girls even Rashi on Chumash (see *The Rebbe: The Extraordinary Life and Worldview of Rabbeinu Yoel Teitelbaum, the Satmar Rebbe* pages 474-475). See *Massei Ish* 5, pages 59-60; *Chinuch Yisrael* 2, pages 487-488.

81 The same applies to the Radak and Malbim etc. (*Emes L'Yaakov*, Y.D. 246, footnote 122).

82 *Ohr Yisrael* 8, pages 55-56; *Emes L'Yaakov* ibid.

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Mishnayos

Women should not learn Mishnayos as this is included in *Torah Sheb'al Peh* (see below).⁸³ However, it is permitted to learn those Rashis in Chumash that quote Mishnayos, even if one wishes to be stringent and not teach women Mishnayos in general.⁸⁴

Gemara

As mentioned, there are some girls' institutions which study Gemara. Many *poskim* prohibit this practice.⁸⁵

Harav Yosef Ber Soloveitchik *zt"l*⁸⁶ provided a Gemara class in Maimonides in Boston, as well as setting up the class in Gemara in Stern College.⁸⁷ Some explain the rationale that today women are offered secular education in universities at the highest degree. Therefore, we must ensure that the same level of learning in Jewish studies is offered as well.⁸⁸ As such,

83 *Igros Moshe*, Y.D. 3:87.

84 See *Orchos Rabbeinu* 1, page 193:20. Refer to *Zekan Aharon* 2:66.

85 *Shevet Halevi* 6:150; *V'yoel Moshe* pages 439-440; *Ohr Yisrael* 8, pages 22-23. Refer to *Shevet Hakehasi* 2:269 which forbids women to learn Gemara by listening to a *Daf Yomi shiur* even on a CD etc. See notes on *Birchei Yosef* 246:7, note 13 against women learning Gemara. See book entitled *Women and the Study of Torah* (Wolowelsky). See *Orchos Rabbeinu* 1, page 193:20 quoting the opinion of the Chazon Ish *zt"l* who did permit it once in a while. Also see *Massei Ish* 2, pages 31-32, footnote 2. See *Orchos Rabbeinu* *ibid.* page 194:23 which brings that the Steipler's *rebbezin* would look into a Gemara for him since he could not see well and read to him what it said. See opinions of Harav Aharon Kotler *zt"l* and Harav Yaakov Kamenetsky *zt"l* quoted in *Divrei Chachamim* page 278:29. See *ibid.* where he quotes if the only option for a woman is that if she does not learn Gemara she will learn secular subjects then it is permitted for her to learn Gemara.

86 *M'peninei Harav* page 214.

87 *Women, Jewish Law, and Modernity* page 113. See *Tradition* 17:3, pages 80-83. See *Halakhic Positions of Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik* volume 6 (Ziegler) page 103; *The Rav Thinking Aloud* page 116. See *Tradition* 24:1, pages 28-37.

88 See *Tradition* 30:4, pages 98-99; *Man of Halacha Man of Faith* (Genack) page 113; *Ten Da'at* 3, pages 7-8. This is available at www.lookstein.org/articles/torah_study_for_women.htm. Refer to *Hadorom* 61, pages 12-19; *Bnei Banim* 3:12. See *Hadorom* 61, pages 33-34. See *Tradition* 28:3, pages 32-33.

it is permitted to learn the Gemara as a background to the relevant *halachos*.⁸⁹

Others argue that it is not practical, as it consumes too much time.⁹⁰

Brachah for a Girl

It is reported that when people came to Rebbetzin Kanievsky *a"h* for a *brachah* on a newborn girl, she would say, “*Tizkeh l’Torah*,” since women learn today. Therefore, the *brachah* was *l’Torah* and not just merely a *brachah* to marry a *ben Torah*.⁹¹

Mixed Classes

While on the topic of Torah education for girls, it is fitting to discuss the concept of mixed classes.

The Meiri⁹² says that schools that teach a profession should teach men and women separately. Many *poskim* say that this also applies to *limudei kodesh*, and boys and girls must be taught separately.⁹³

It is known that in for a variety of reasons earlier out of town schools had to be set up with mixed classes.⁹⁴ Many day schools that were established decades ago were serving

89 Opinion of Harav Yosef Ber Soloveitchik *zt"l* as expressed by Harav Twersky *shlit"u* (thank you to Rabbi Aryeh Lebowitz *shlit"u* for showing me this source). See www.torahweb.org/torah/special/2003/rwte_JA_women.html. Refer to *Tradition* 28:3, pages 31-33. See hirhurim.blogspot.com; www.torahmusings.com/2005/08/women-learning-gemara-ii/. Perhaps if women are learning Gemara they should learn the parts which are relevant to their observance of mitzvos. See *Hadorom* 61, pages 40-41. Refer to *Noam* 3, pages 131-134.

90 *Ibid.* pages 116-117.

91 *Rebbetzin Kanievsky* page 417 (thank you to Rabbi Aryeh Lebowitz *shlit"u* for providing me with this source).

92 *Maseches Kiddushin* 80b, page 352. In the footnote *ibid.* he questions why this is not brought in the *Rambam* or *Shulchan Aruch*.

93 *Shevet Halevi*, O.C. 1:29; *Yabia Omer*, E.H. 4:4, 10:23. See *Yalkut Yosef* on *Rosh Hashanah* 13, page 19:1.

94 Refer to *Nefesh Harav* page 237. See www.jewishideas.org/print/543.



כל השווה הלכות בכל יום מובטח לו שהוא בן עולם הבא... (תדה עב)

children who had come from non-observant families. In the absence of a co-educational institution many of those children would have certainly received either no or little Jewish education. The demographics of many neighborhoods have changed over the past few decades, resulting in many of these same institutions serving an exclusively Orthodox parent body that would send their children to a yeshivah regardless of the availability of a co-educational institution.⁹⁵ Many out-of-town communities have a very small amount of children per class, and if kept separate it would be fiscally impossible to maintain the school.⁹⁶ Some suggest that when the girls' education will be jeopardized if they are taught separately, then it is better to have them mixed with the boys. However, each case needs to be judged on its own.⁹⁷ This is particularly true today, when the education in girls' schools is of the highest quality. Furthermore, mixing classes today may lead to things which were non-issues in the early to mid-1900s.

The *Sefer Chassidim*⁹⁸ says not to mix boys and girls together since they may sin.

The *Shevet Halevi*⁹⁹ maintains that a school that has mixed classes from five years of age until eleven have *talmidei chachamim* who have *yirei Shamayim* faculty but perhaps they were not listened to when they suggested to have separate classes for boys and girls. On the other hand, he notes that mixed classes make the children accustomed to the opposite gender and this is not correct.¹⁰⁰

95 See article from Rabbi Aryeh Lebowitz on www.yutorah.org

96 See www.lookstein.org. See *Shevet Halevi* 10:178; *Yechaveh Daas* 4:46; *Yabia Omer*, E.H. 4:4.

97 See article from Rabbi Aryeh Lebowitz on www.yutorah.org in depth.

98 168.

99 1:29.

100 E.H. 5:206.



איך ללמוד תורה עם בנות? איך ללמוד תורה עם בנות? איך ללמוד תורה עם בנות? (ברכות ט)

כל השונה הלכות בכל יום מובטח לו שהוא בן עולם הנא... (גדה עב)

Harav Moshe Feinstein *zt"l*¹⁰¹ maintained that even very young children should be taught separately. However, if it is hard to have separate classes for the very young, one can be lenient.¹⁰² The *minhag* seems to be that we are lenient for nursery age children.¹⁰³ Those schools that teach both boys and girls together are not acting correctly unless there is no alternative.¹⁰⁴

Male Teaching Females and Vice Versa

A single male¹⁰⁵ may not teach girls,¹⁰⁶ since the mothers of the child will come to school and it may come to a *michshal*.¹⁰⁷ The problem is only on a set schedule, but it is permitted on an occasional basis.¹⁰⁸ Today, it is not an issue, as the children are delivered by bus and carpools.¹⁰⁹ Therefore, teaching boys who come on their own is also permitted.¹¹⁰

A married man may teach boys even if his wife is not with him while teaching,¹¹¹ since when one is married he is

101 *Igros Moshe, Y.D.* 1:137. See *Igros Moshe, Y.D.* 2:104, 3:73, 78, 79, 4:28. Refer to *V'ein Lamo Michshol* 8, pages 111-112.

102 *Igros Moshe* *ibid.* See *B'mechitzas Rabbeinu* pages 88-89 which is lenient until age nine in certain situations. Refer to *Yabia Omer, Y.D.* 10:23. See *Hamayin* 29, page 33.

103 Harav Yisroel Belsky *zt"l*.

104 See *Asei Lecha Rav* 2:60.

105 *Rashi, Maseches Kiddushin* 82a "lo," *Tosafos* "lo." See *Beis Shmuel, E.H.* 22:19; *Taz* 11; *Pischei Teshuvah* 13. Refer to *Chelkas Mechokek* 21. See *Chinuch Yisrael* 2, page 657 about a non-married person working.

106 See *Beis Shmuel, E.H.* 22:20; *Chachmas Adam* 126:10.

107 Refer to *Maseches Kiddushin* 82a; *Rambam, Hilchos Issurei Biah* 22:13; *Talmud Torah* 2:4; *Shulchan Aruch, E.H.* 22:20, *Y.D.* 225:20; *Beis Shmuel, E.H.* 22:11; *Chachmas Adam* 126:10. Refer to *Rashi, Maseches Kiddushin* 82 "ma'ei tama." See *Beis Avi* 4:142. Refer to *Shevet Halevi* 3:183, 5:206.

108 *Tzitz Eliezer* 6:40:27:10.

109 See *Bach, Y.D.* 245; *Aruch Hashulchan, Y.D.* 245:20; *Tzitz Eliezer* 6:40:26; *Shevet Halevi* 3:183; *M'Beis Levi* 18, page 43. See *Igros Moshe, Y.D.* 3:73. Refer to *Minchas Ish* 2:22:1.

110 *Ibid.* 2:22:7.

111 Refer to *Rambam, Hilchos Issurei Biah* 22:13.

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unlikely to come to a *michshal*. In addition, we can apply the *heter* of the previous paragraph, that the entire concern does not apply today.¹¹²

The *poskim* mention that a woman (even married)¹¹³ should not teach boys since the fathers come to bring the children to school and there would be an issue of *yichud*.¹¹⁴ Here, too, this is not an issue in a school setting¹¹⁵ where many people are present at the school.¹¹⁶ In either case, if it is not in a pressing situation females should not teach teenage boys, and there is no difference if the teacher is young or old.¹¹⁷

Some frown upon even married men teaching girls over *bas mitzvah*.¹¹⁸ Today, the practice is that even *rabbanim* teach young girls, and it seems to be an accepted practice. The fact is that they teach the girls halachah, which cannot be taught as well by other people.¹¹⁹ Theoretically, a *mechitzah* should be made between the teacher and girls

112 *Igros Moshe*, E.H. 4:65:13; *Tzitz Eliezer* 6:40:27:20; *Minchas Ish* 2:22:3, 8. In regard to a *rebbei* whose wife does not live with him due to arguments see *Minchas Ish* 2:22:4.

113 *Beis Shmuel*, E.H. 22:22; *Chelkas Michokek* 21. Refer to *B'mareh Habezek* 2, page 85 about a woman working in a religious school and the obligation to cover her hair.

114 *Maseches Kiddushin* 82a; *Rambam*, *Hilchos Issurei Biah* 22:13; see *Talmud Torah* 2:4; *Rosh*, *Maseches Kiddushin* 4:26; *Shulchan Aruch*, E.H. 22:20, Y.D. 225:21; *Chachmas Adam* 126:10. Refer to *Taz*, Y.D. 245:7. Also see *Tzitz Eliezer* 6:40:27 in depth.

115 This is not the case in a playgroup; see *Igros Moshe*, Y.D. 3:73.

116 *Igros Moshe*, Y.D. 3:73; *Tzitz Eliezer* 6:40:27, 14:97; *Shevet Halevi* 5:206; *M'Beis Levi* 18, page 43; *Minchas Ish* 2:23:6-7. See *Shevet Halevi* 4:16. Also see *Teshuras Shai* 1:170. Refer to opinion of Harav Chaim Pinchas Scheinberg *zt"l* quoted in *Divrei Chachamim* page 255:44. See opinion of Harav Elyashiv *zt"l* quoted in *Halichos Bas Yisrael* 7:23, footnote 44. Some maintain not to have women teach boys over the age of 9 (see *Halichos Bas Yisrael* 7:23; *Lehoros Nassan* 7:100; *Tzitz Eliezer* 6:20:27:19, 14:97).

117 *Igros Moshe*, Y.D. 3:73. Refer to *M'Beis Levi* 4, pages 75-78.

118 Refer to *Tzitz Eliezer* 6:40:26:10; *Minchas Ish* 2:22:9, footnote 9 in depth, 23:8, footnote 8. See *Teshuras Shai*, *kamma* 170. Refer to *Sefer Chassidim* 313; *Knesses Hagedolah*, E.H. 22:12.

119 See *Beis Avi* 3:40. Refer to *ibid.* where he frowns upon a male teaching older women nothing relating to Torah. Refer to *Teshuras Shai* 1:170.

איננו להקדיף"ה בעולמו אלא יד אמות של הלכה בלבד... (ברכות ח')

since he is looking at the girls while teaching.¹²⁰ However, this is not the custom, nor is it practical.¹²¹

Lectures for Women in a Shul

Some *poskim* frown upon having lectures for women in a shul.¹²² Rather, they should have it in a side room or in the women's section.

כל השומה הלכות בכל יום מובטח לה שהוא בן עולם הנא... (מדה עב.)

120 Refer to *Az Nidberu* 12:45; *Beis Avi* 3:40.

121 Ibid. See 4:142.

122 *Mishneh Halachos* 11:62. See *Igros Moshe, Y.D.* 5:12.

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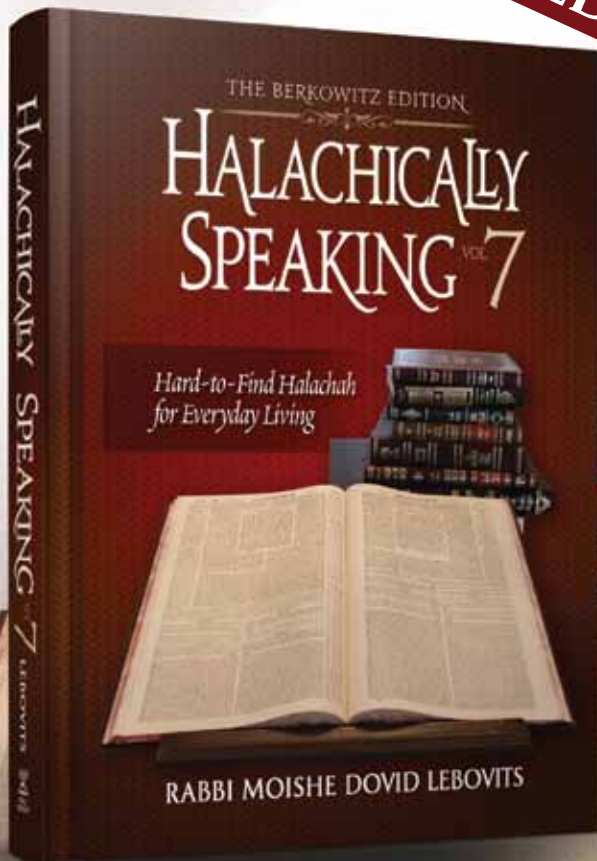
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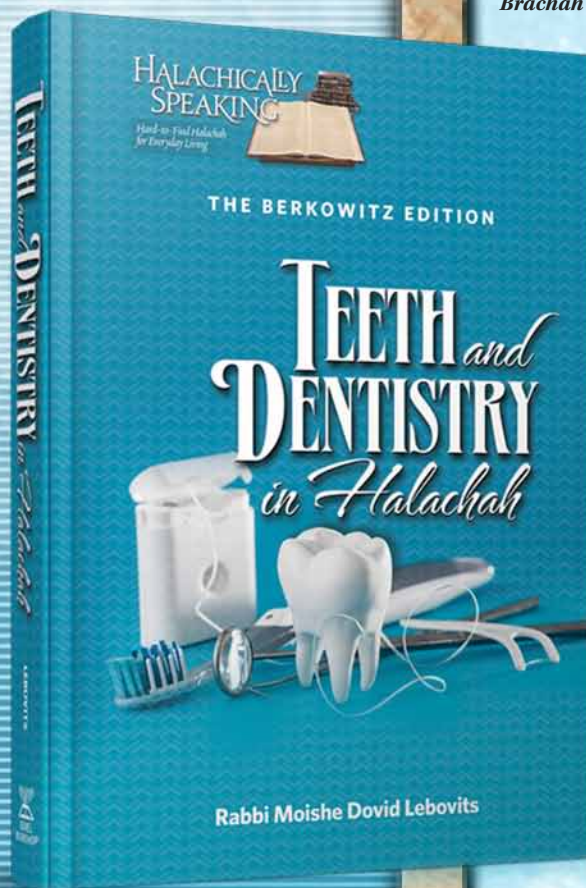


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