Abst ract

The objective of this research was to investigate 'Conservatism, Revolution and Women in Between'.

Like all religions, Judaism presents a codex of values and attempts to preserve its ancient traditions. Kibbutz society is the product of a revolutionary movement with roots in the beginning of the 20th century, which seeks to change social priorities.

The status of women is one of the most important issues put to the proof when the old meets the new and when tradition encounters change.

The status of women in Judaism undergoes changing expression at the point where the potential for equality meets differentiated functionalities. Such expression appears in every aspect of religion, society and culture and has direct implications on family structure. In Judaism, family life has intrinsic sanctity and each side of family life has a traditional role. As is true for any social or cultural change, heightened awareness of the need for equality presents a challenge for the traditional structure and the traditional division of tasks between men and women.

The principal ideological precepts adopted by the movement for social change that created the Kibbutz in Israel, are cooperation and equality. The formulation of this ideology and its ability to perpetuate also depend upon other factors such as time and place. The Religious Kibbutz Movement is on the one hand, an integral part of the general kibbutz movement and an active adherent to many of its basic values; but on the other hand, at the very foundation of its ethos there are religious values that it seeks to integrate with the principles of cooperation and equality.

By its very nature, as this revolutionary movement attempts to instill and perpetuate change, it must place a high value on cooperative education that expresses kibbutz values and inculcates

them in the next generation – both boys and girls. In religious terms, this is the essential bone of contention.

As expressed in the Torah – the Jewish codex, Jews must heed and obey their sages on all matters of law and religion. The limits of authority and discipline are the subject of discourse within the world of religious law.

The Religious Kibbutz Movement tends to expand the scope of its members' and institutions' autonomy and has little need for sages' opinions and authority, particularly when changes occur in reference to national and social issues (the status of women, societal structures, etc).

In Jewish tradition, when a boy reaches the age of 13, the age at which he is accepted into adult society and bears responsibility for his actions, this rite of passage is accompanied by ceremonies and celebrations. In the past, Jewish communities and families did not celebrate in the same way a girl's transition into adult society at the traditional age of 12. The new idea of celebrating this event for a girl within the family and at social gatherings resulted in arguments about the applicable religious law and a social-cultural struggle. Slowly but surely, the new skeleton frameworks for such celebrations gained acceptance at different levels and this research examined their nature, including comparison with the centerpiece of the traditional ceremonies; the newly adult male's calling to the public reading of the Torah. Study of Torah is at the core of historical Jewish culture, because the Torah is both the fountain of cultural life and the essence of Jewish survival.

Throughout most of Jewish history, Torah study and in particular, the study of the Oral Law – the Talmud, has been a male prerogative, with those few exceptions that merely prove the rule.

With the coming of the equality revolution, women have become equal partners in all the different aspects of such studies, including the Talmud. Towards the end of the 20th century,

many considered this the most significant revolution change in Jewish religious life. For over five decades, women and girls from Kibbutz Hadati have studied Talmud. This research attempted to investigate the success of this project and its religious significance for those girls growing up in the Religious Kibbutz Movement.

These issues put tradition and change into sharp juxtaposition, which this research will examine at both theoretical and practical levels. To what degree can the theories of equality between the sexes flourishing in an atmosphere of change (or even revolution) break through the shell of conservative tradition? To what degree is tradition's ability to absorb the new reality dependent upon its flexibility and willing to embrace burgeoning change? To what degree is successful change dependent upon the possibilities of connecting with and integrating with traditional principles? These questions provide the backdrop for this research.

Research Objectives:

This research has a dual objective. First, it seeks to present the unique facets of the education and culture imbibed by girls in Religious Kibbutz Movement as a model for the confrontation between tradition and change and attempts to follow changes in educational and cultural patterns as they have occurred along a time line. Second, the research tried to reach initial conclusions about the findings and thereby determine which infrastructures are best suited for the implementation of such processes.

Research Questions:

As determined by Prof. Na'ama Sabar Ben-Yehoshua (1990), the initial research questions for this qualitative research are divided into three categories:

1. <u>Conceptual Question</u>: What is the link between the educational ideas presented by Hakibbutz Hadati and how the girls within its system perceive the celebratory events and the learning of Talmud?

2. <u>Action Question</u>: How do the girls in Hakibbutz Hadati cope with these aspects of their educational lives?

3. <u>Value Question</u>: To what degree has Religious Kibbutz Movement's educational approach been successful in the fields investigated as expressed by those girls in their life-style choices.

The Target Population Investigated:

For the purposes of this research, two groups each comprising some twelve girls brought up on Religious Kibbutz Movement Kibbutzim in the south of the country was interviewed at length. The girls had been nearing or had recently ended their high school education. Through these interviews, it was been possible to examine the degree to which the Movement's ideologically weighted education finds apparent expression. The first group was interviewed during the early 1990's and the second group had been interviewed for the purposes of this research.

Research Methodology:

The research methodology was employed the naturalistic model developed by Walker (1971). The search for a complete picture, while preferring the interviewee's natural state (Sabar, 1990) has resulted in the selection of a qualitative research approach, which includes the aim to understand phenomena and not be satisfied by their explanation through the formulation of rules and generalizations (Stake, 1978) The unique cultural and educational aspects young women's lives in the Religious Kibbutz Movement had been investigated as case studies.

******

The research exposed a positive correlation between the educational investment in the home and school, and the continuity of values among the students. The research also revealed that despite the difficulties in reducing the gaps between boys and girls in the learning of Gemara and in the celebration of the Bar/Bat of education and values .Mitzvah, in the religious kibbutz community (and similar communities) this is an irreversible process, which already today points to success from the point of view In addition, the research indicated areas where improvement and correction are necessary in order for the process to advance to yield good educational fruits and to maintain its profound affinity for old Jewish tradition.

The changes that the kibbutz movement has been undergoing also radiate onto educational values and ways to apply them among the young. The continuous tension between the public and its needs vs. self-fulfillment has appeared and earns growing emphasis over the years (as proven by the gap between the two interview periods). Finally, the research indicates that the path of balance and listening is the best way to lead the religious-kibbutz society and its educational institutions to a safe haven.

The Kibbutz

A movement that seeks to change the world cannot deny itself self-change. As a society with a high level of self-awareness whose purpose is involvement in its surroundings, pondering and pressures for change have always been heard within it. Indeed, since it has been in existence, the kibbutz movement has undergone organizational and institutional changes, and even changes in values. However, one should not ignore the permutation that has been taking place since the middle of the 80s that encompasses all aspects of life to the point that the intensity and scope of change appear as a threat to the very existence of the values of partnership and equality which stand at the foundation of kibbutz society.

To understand today's kibbutz in the processes of change, it is necessary to become familiar with the kibbutz as it was perceived by its founders.

This chapter will be divided into two main parts: the first will describe the "original" kibbutz and the second will describe processes of change, something continuing even today.

A. A look at the kibbutz – ideology, law, and education

The kibbutz is not a coincidental collection of people whose lifestyles, principles, and goals are created during the course of its existence within a changing reality, but rather a social entity directed on a basis of principles and towards a goal (G. Rosenthal, 1994, p. 14). The kibbutz is a social movement planted in reality; it uses the tools of the civilization within which it exists as well as the achievements of progress, in order to help bring about a better world (A. Barzel, 1988, p. 15). "A kibbutz member is a person who cares about social justice" (A. Helman, 1994, p. 63).

The founders of the kibbutz movement were a "very selective group" (Y. Krol, 1994, p. 42). "This was an elite that conquered its place not by status, but by its lifestyle, which was an organic element in elitism…" (E. Oved, 1994, p. 107). The mission is a value in the kibbutz ethos, with the important objective being in the area of education: "the making of a new person" (R. Seginer, 1994, p. 225; Y. Dror, 1994, p. 238). Each kibbutz member faces severe conflicts and is regularly expected to make decisions that obligate all the members to thought in terms of reforming the world (A. Avrahami, 1998, p. 49; Y. Dar, 1998, pp. 24-28).

An essential component in the kibbutz point of view is the principle of justice in interpersonal relationships. This principle is first expressed in the struggle for equality. Without equality, justice has no meaning, and the lack of stability in an unjust society inevitably will lead to its

decay. Aryeh Nadler (1994, p. 146) claims that justice can be realized through the awareness of belonging, when each individual sees himself as a living organ that is part of the whole, which stipulates the whole and is stipulated by it [1]. The awareness of unity is inherent in the viewpoint of the kibbutz: the act, the event, and private people draw their meaning from the unity of the purpose (hidden or revealed) of the kibbutz. This principle of unity was embodied in the ideal of equality of the kibbutz, and is expressed in the belief in the inner-true value of man, in his status, his rights and the abandonment of the status based on division of work and roles[2].

According to A. Barzel (1984, p. 164), "The creation of any collective-type regime means rejection of the natural inequality between man as a source of their welfare, and rejection of the circumstantial inequality that is created in the upheavals of events - of various realities - of people during the course of their lifetime". According to his viewpoint, these two types of inequality cause great damage because the differences intensify from generation to generation (A. Barzel, 1984, p. 167). In his opinion, the kibbutz is a cooperative community and: "the cooperative communities are the most intensive forms of togetherness that exist".

The kibbutz was established as a form of Zionist - socialist, cooperative, and equal - life in which production and consumption are shared and the members are all responsible for each other in terms of their social security (Y. Dror, 2002, p. 13). According to Opaz (1986, pp. 335-336), the first founders of the kibbutz experienced the feeling of "renewed birth" – they removed their (negative, in their opinion) "diaspora" identity and wore a new Jewish-humane identity (A. Zamir, 1991, p. 7)[3].

The kibbutz cut the connection between the member's contribution to the kibbutz and what he received in return. This is the premise of the kibbutz as an equal society. "All work has equal value just like each person has equal value and each person is expected to contribute according to his ability and will receive according to his needs and according to the ability of the kibbutz" (Ben Horin, 1987, p. 20) [4]. The assumption is that the work ethic, which is

---

[1] This type of relationships exacted a high price in the personality structure of religious kibbutz members that was expressed as a high level of emotional decline and absent-mindedness (R. Plotnick, 1998, p. 85; Sharabani & Weissman, 1998, pp. 198-199; E. Regev, 1977).

[2] It became apparent that since the birth of the first children on the kibbutz, there has been a stereotype tying occupation to sex and it slowly became accepted that service-related jobs are the compulsory area of women (R. Bar-Yosef, 1992, p. 1976; A. Zamir, 1994, p. 180). Eliezer Ben-Rafael (1986, p. 78) claims that although there is a belief in the value of equality, they are not willing to abandon the perception of "the right man in the right job", and this causes fixation of the situation.

[3] And indeed, the initial role of the kibbutz member was seen as lacking charisma (A. Fishman, 1990, pp. 121-132).

[4] Until recent years, the characteristic sentence was: each according to his ability and each according to his needs. Because of economic crisis that led to changes in the kibbutzim, this (underlined) part was added to the

completely cut off from production (except for the pride of personal and community success) and connected to collective consumption, is what encourages diligence and loyalty.

The socialistic-historical background of the kibbutz and its repercussions

It should be remembered that not only absolute ideology stands at the basis of the framework and concept of the kibbutz, but also that social conditions and historical events dictated the creation of the lines of kibbutz life.

The kibbutz is an attempt to create a cohesive society not based on tribal-family ties. It grew within a society in which the power of the tribe and family to determine the fate of the individual man had dissolved.

In traditional society (*i.e.*, in the past), man felt a deep sense of belonging to a limited community (mainly rural) that encompassed all areas of his life. The community dictated the rules of behavior, but also granted love and security. According to Z. Ben Horin (1987), the kibbutz was established in order for man to feel "freed from the shackles of tradition and from belonging to any community … The kibbutz, in the opinion of its founders, was supposed to be the answer to the problem of the alienation of modern man, in the attempt to create a community that returns to man the sense of belonging, which is marked by concern and mutual responsibility… on the basis of an ideological value of closeness". One who joins a kibbutz does not give up his freedom and individual desires, but expects to fulfill them in a collective-communal framework.

The mission of settlement in Israel in light of the Zionist or socio-elitist vision, in the living conditions that existed at the time (at the beginning of the previous century), forced those who wanted it to create a way of life and even "ideals", and the force driving these ideals was necessity (Z. Ben Horin, 1987, p. 20). Yuval Dror (2002, p. 13), in the wake of historical research on the 90 years of the existence of the kibbutz, summarizes that "kibbutz practicality preceded theory" …

Tz. Admonit (1962a) writes on this subject: "The kibbutz in Israel was not created out of a particular social theory, it was born of the actual needs of a working public, because the cruel reality of their lives found them facing many harsh needs and they searched for a solution for all of them in the kibbutz", out of the belief that they should give up their personal desires (Talmon-Gerber, 1980)[5].

---

key sentence.

[5] See extreme examples on the issue of the establishment of the family as disturbing or opposing a life of smoothness and devotion (Tzur et al., 1981, p. 14; A. Yadin, 1994, p. 243; Ben Horin, 1987, p. 33; Tz Admonuit,

The influence of time is also felt in the more permanent ideals that are generally accepted today on kibbutzim, such as the subject of 'being satisfied with having little', which criticizes the phoniness in the bourgeois lifestyle; and the coping with the division that money and financial status create among people, dividing between man and nature and work, and which represents a continuation of Jewish tradition (A. Tz Admonuit, ibid., p. 87). According to Y. Talmon- Graber (1980), all spiritual ideas were also related to adaptation to the material conditions in which the laborers in Israel lived during that period: unsatisfactory nutrition, lack of clothing, primitive housing conditions, and poor health. The refusal to accept for themselves the value of being satisfied with having little would bring the workers to leave the country or to escape from a life of work. This is also true for the communal kitchen, the shared caring of the children [6], the living arrangements, and the culture that were all marked by an ideological "tune". Some were not influenced by the eternity but by the moment – from economic necessity (A. Yadlin, 1994, p. 243).

From this it should be understood that change in times and living conditions, even though it does not harm the ideals of justice and goodness, can change the way they appear. Therefore, even in a kibbutz whose life patterns were determined in light of the ideal vision, they were,

---

1962a, p. 77).

[6] Girls of the second generation saw their mothers as victims of the 'coeducational' method and believe that their mothers did this only halfheartedly (A. Zamir, 1994, p. 184). In the past, until the late 80s, in kibbutz society, "education was removed from the authority of the family to the authority of the society, and had an influence on its fate and development" (S. Golan, 1961). The community has the general responsibility for education of the children. The children are the children of the kibbutz which acts as collective parents (Y. Dar, 1994, p. 223) The belief was that coeducation is a result of a cooperative society and it educates towards this by translating its values.

One cannot deny the fact that the process that led coeducation began with the cooperation between mothers in the raising of their children. In this way, one could watch and care for the children of the others, so that they were free for the "ideal – pioneer" work. This is what led to the establishment of the 'children's houses' which was a sort of "institution without mothers" (R. Spitz, 1966, pp. 12-14; Y. Dror, 2002, p. 227). From babyhood, the children would sleep in the framework of 'sleeping all together' – they spent the night in the children's houses, where the *metapelet* on duty was responsible for putting them to bed, and the night guard watched them at night.

This situation led to the fact that more than once, the *metapelet* was more significant to the child than his parents, who visited at designated times of the day. The role of the *metapelet* was to worry about all the services for the children (A. Zamir, 1991, p. 105), and it was she who represented the education outside the family (she even attended parents meetings, visits to the doctor, etc.).

For the pro and con reasons, each of the sleeping arrangements is discussed in detail by Y. Ashush and T. Rapoport (1999, pp. 72-73).

At the end of the 60s, 'rebellious' kibbutzim began to emerge that decided to change to a family sleeping arrangement, something that put a great burden on the woman and broadened the family functions. More on the changes in this area is in the subchapter dealing with changes taking place in the kibbutz through the present.

As said at the beginning, the framework of education was within the framework of that age group by the *metapelet*. It took place in the children's house. With time, a school was established in one of the kibbutzim, and children from several kibbutzim were enrolled there. The school was perceived as a non-differential and non-selective educational institution (only among kibbutz members). The learning process was based on trial and error, with special attention given to the process. The role of the teacher is designated as diffusive and as an "educator" (A. Zamir, 1994, ibid, p. 184).

as mentioned, influenced also by changing conditions of time (S. Golan, 1961; A. Avrahami, 1998, p. 5; Y. Dror, 2002, p. 13). With the passing time, voices began to be heard that tested and criticized the patterns of the old life and even called for its change.

Coeducation – Education in the kibbutz movement

Two factors played a role in the creation of the special system of education on the kibbutz – the collective ideal and necessity.

In effect, the content and form of coeducation (the educational framework and institutions of kibbutz children) reflect the goal of kibbutz society and its destiny, and questions on coeducation are perceived as questions on life, with the general goal being: "to train the students to be kibbutz members: (Y. Dar, 1994, p. 223). Kibbutz education is one of the means of kibbutz socialization and among the most important of them. The kibbutz student grows in different areas in which his personal traits, social roles, behavioral norms, and beliefs are molded, and this in order to guarantee that there will be a generation to continue the kibbutz way of life (M. Natan, 1994, p. 229).

These principles are realized by cultivating skills for a collective life: acquisition of value commitments (equality and cooperation [7], work as a goal, democracy, etc.) as well as cultivation of an emotional commitment to the community: to history, the land, and the people[8].

The uniqueness of coeducation was formulated in 'Principles of Coeducation' [9], which included the principle of the uniformity of education and teaching/"synthetic education" (Y. Dror, 2002, p. 34)[10], the principle of autonomy (out of guided independence) of students in the children's and teenage age groups, the principle of the continuity of coeducation (from infancy until the end of the teenage years) with an understanding of the uniqueness at every age [11]. An additional principle refers to the autonomy of the teaching staffs: from the beginning of the

---

[7] During their education, the children of the kibbutz absorb the spirit of equality and respect for the individual and the collective (M. Alon, 1986; A. Zamir, 1988).

[8] Aaron Yadlin (1994, p. 243) reinforces the opinion that there is a concept 'kibbutz education' which is beyond the regular school perception. According to this perception, the place of the school, the pedagogic climate, the methods are part of a general perception.

[9] Yuval Dror, 2002, pp. 34-37; E. Shoham, 1998, pp. 153-160.

[10] This means the integration of learning and social/work life, and of formal and informal components. According to Yuval Dror (2002, p. 34), "this was in line with the world-reforming perspectives of socialistic Zionism", for example, breaking the educational sequence by a half year of work, being drafted to the army during periods of heavy work pressure on the kibbutz, and informal educational activities (E. Hanoch, 8, 1993, p. 81).

[11] Each age is marked by its own characteristics, as well as educational principles unique to it. Each stage is part of the continuity, but wasn't intended only as preparation for the next stages.

settlement of the country, the teachers in the kibbutz schools were the ones responsible for the educational curricula.

Coeducation is practiced on the kibbutzim. A group of children has always been the unifying body from infancy until the teenage period and maturity. The children have turned into an excellent educational means to develop public opinion and collective conscience. Some of the children's activities (greenhouse, animal corner) were meant to give the feeling that the children's society is part of the adult society (Dror and Bar Lev, 1993; Dror, 1997).

Coeducation is not coerced – it is done through the creation of public opinion and a social conscience. Its fans call it (A. Levy, 1994, p. 136) 'education with a mission.' In this society, it is taught that work and jobs that help the collective are prestigious and authoritative (E. Ben Rafael, 1986, p. 53) [12] and that's how the need for achievements is reached among the youth, achievements that according to Bar Lev (1992), are of a collective, not individualistic, orientation. This characteristic also develops as a result of the self-image of the kibbutz as an imperfect society that creates the aspiration for perfection, and is a result of the tension existing between competition and cooperation among its members [13].

This grasp of coeducation as the principal tool for education following the path of the founding parents (fulfillment of the commandments together with realization of Zionism, openness, tolerance, and creative work) is clearly brought to expression in the religious kibbutz. In 1992, a circular discussed various proposals on the perception of autonomy and the responsibility resting on coeducation in the religious kibbutz (Appendix 1). It emerges that this education is specific for kibbutz society and is a means for the socialization of its youth into the framework of the society in which they live. In terms of the social and moral values relayed through it, it is possible to lean on the values endowed to the youth growing up on the kibbutz (A. Avrahami, 1994, pp. 235-236; Kahana, 1966, pp. 65-68).

The desire to maintain unique educational autonomy as an inseparable part of kibbutz life necessitated a struggle and often exacted a price. Many times the *metapelet* (children's caretaker) was the children's first teacher and educator even in nursery and elementary school. Sometimes she had no formal training and acted without a designated philosophy of education (Y. Dror, 2002). The 'field' dictated the philosophy of education and it happened more than

---

[12] See also the conceptual separation between 'work' and 'public activity' even though both are of considerable value (Ben Rafael, 1986, p. 64)
[13] According to an abstract from the Educational Conference in Kibbutz Yavne (1992).

once that in teacher conferences and meetings of the kibbutz movement, methods and beliefs had to be altered in wake of what was actually done in the field.

In following up on the subject of education (Y. Dror, 2002, pp. 20-21), it emerges that in the 30s and 40s, theory was corrected in light of actual practice [14], and only in the middle of the 40s and 50s, educational regulations were adapted to the official frameworks, but a unique stream[15] allowing the maintenance of autonomous educational centers and which is a role model for the general education, was maintained, and in that way fulfilled the "desire to lead the revolution and unprecedented renewal" (Y. Dror, ibid, p. 31).

From the 80s until the end of the 20 [th] century (a period of severe economic, social, and conceptual crisis in the kibbutz movement, especially in the secular kibbutzim), kibbutzim disbanded and the birth rate dropped. The situation demanded the opening of doors and the possibility of receiving treatment and education within the framework of the kibbutz for the outside population as well.

According to the research study of Palgi and Sharir (1997), these things were true until the beginning of the process of change the kibbutzim have been undergoing from the 80s until the present (this is discussed in detail in the second part of this chapter which deals with changes the kibbutz society is undergoing in current times).

Pedagogic Background in the Kibbutz Movement

The educational doctrine of the kibbutz movement has been influenced by psychoanalytical approaches and by the doctrine of progressive educators (the method of processes) such as Dewey and Russo, while being integrated with Jewish and socialistic sources (Dror, p. 16, 38), but it grew and always maintained interaction with the actual kibbutz reality (ibid, p. 30).

One of the important principles of the doctrine of education adopted by the kibbutz was: the unity of education and teaching – while consolidating the formal and the informal components. In this way, the principle of autonomy was adopted, meaning the students were given guided independence. The dominance of this principle is in accordance with Dewey and Russo, who held the perspective that learning requires goals, and leads, incidentally, to action, and, therefore, the schools should be home-like and not split up (ibid., p. 45).

---

[14] Many things (such as size of age group) were left open for practical decisions according to the conditions of each kibbutz (Y. Dror, 2002, p. 66).
[15] Called: the education of settlement. This is a separate educational stream in the Ministry of Education (voices have been heard more than once asking to integrate it, because of financial considerations, into one of the other streams in the country, but until now without success).

Kibbutz education, through the community of children, relies on Freud's psychoanalysis (child and adolescent psychology) (and later Skinner). According to this, childhood is crucially important to human development. The practical significance of this kind of education obligates: learning the emotional world of the child, treating him with respect, and perceiving him as a total personality rather than a passive object in which to instill habits and impart doctrine. In this field, the influence of Russo's doctrine, which claims that a person cannot live without society, is recognized.

In Dewey's perspective, the child is considered an actual person – not just a future member of society towards which he is being educated but a member of the community in which he lives in the present. From this comes the belief that the school community should be a *schulgemeinde* (community school).

The egalitarian philosophy of collective education leans on the great weight of cognitive development of the child that is the result of reciprocal relations between children and their surroundings – as taught by Piaget. The principles of this education, and since the kibbutz school is a social institution, are anchored in Dewey, who claimed that the child should be seen as someone who is becoming a man, who lives in the society in which he matures during the learning processes – this is the main value of pragmatism. This kind of education is the social-educational essence whose purpose is imparting values and developing features to honor the way of life of the fathers, and which will lead to identification with the emotions and ideas along with the desire for its continuation. In this too there is compatibility with Dewey's approach that education stands on a psychological foundation as well as on a social democratic foundation.

According to Dewey's perspective, the world is prone to compensations, and education is the rebuilding of the experience for the purpose of correspondence with the surroundings and changing situations. According to this approach, the child should not be prepared for a fixed system of conditions, but rather be equipped with the tools needed for additional growth – the advanced progressive education method leans on this (the purpose of growth – additional growth, and from this - that the purpose of education is the constant growth of the person).

In its first days, the kibbutz school, like Dewey in his time, attempted to establish a community of children patterned after and in parallel to the adult society (Hebrew Encyclopedia, p. 862). Even now, 12 [th] graders from the school under investigation are given an assignment to establish a kibbutz and for one week, completely by themselves, they must

lead, build, and maintain life as if they were adults – absolutely independently. This reinforces the progressive idea that sees education as a life experience and a training system for a life connected to the social reality.

The kibbutz school is based on it being a community-communal school. Its nickname is 'school without walls', since its location on the kibbutz grounds is not coincidental and technical, but reflects the continuity and the educational link to the community. Accordingly, the role of the teacher is not limited merely to a particular subject and teaching hours, but he is a leader who coordinates and encourages the sense of having a common purpose; he is the organizing authority who teaches the preservation of individual freedom, and, thus, is responsible for the socialization process that is among the aims of the education.

It should be noted that this picture belonged to the reality or ideal of kibbutz education until the 80s of the 20th century. Today, the trend in kibbutz schools (especially in the intermediate and high schools) is changing and tends to concentrate more on the learning aspect rather than the educational aspect.

One of the significant changes that has occurred in the kibbutz movement and its educational perspective, is related to the transition from collectivism to individualism. According to Bar Lev (1998), it is a fact that the religious kibbutz was ahead of the other kibbutz movements in its basic approach of individualism as a necessary component in education. Along with this, for an extended period of time, it preserved loyalty to the basis of collectivism in the educational program. The combination of the two not only created inner balance that allowed adjustment to internal and external changes, but is one of the main characteristics of the educational approach on the religious kibbutz in other planes as well. This enables balance between the pedagogic-socialistic approach and the psychological approach in education (Hebrew Encyclopedia, p. 860).

In general, the pedagogy that sees the child in the center, and the psychology that puts the personality in the center, balanced the centrality of the concepts of the educational group in the kibbutz. Kibbutz education attempted to reach a connection (it is doubtful that it can be done) between a doctrine of collective ideas that tends towards being closed, and progressive pedagogy that focuses on the individual; thus there is tension between collectivism and individuality.

This is the tension between education for continuity, and maintaining what already exists versus renewal and education towards social change. The second contrast is between

nurturing of the group or nurturing of the individual – the integration of these is a balanced compromise.

B. The religious kibbutz

The roots of the religious kibbutz date back to Germany in the 20s of the 20th century (Fishman, 1990, p. 78).

The religious kibbutz conducted and still conducts relationships of both cooperation and segregation from the general – secular kibbutz movement.

"Religion and life" is a subject that has occupied Jewish society since the Enlightenment Period and has not died out since then. It is one of the founding ideas of the religious kibbutz. In the 19th and 20th centuries, movements of modernization emerged among the orthodox Jews: first, "Torah with good manners" [16] in Germany, later religious Zionism, mainly in Eastern Europe and in the Land of Israel, and finally, the religious kibbutz, that was nourished from the new religious values and opened a channel of religious renewal of its own. The religious kibbutz being orthodox, undressed the traditional figure of the closed Jew who had existed in the life order and dressed him with a modern image, while referring positively to the general-humane life without abandoning religion. In this process, the religious renewers attempted to raise modern universal values to the same plane of traditional Jewish values, out of sensitivity to the religious post-emancipation Jewish identity (A. Fishman, 1990, *Petah Devar*, p. 9) [17]. The uniqueness of the religious kibbutz is affixed to the establishment of independent modern religious communities in the format of the secular kibbutz – caught in the momentum of modernization under the influence of nationalism and socialism.

The sources of Jewish tradition can substantiate the fact that at the basis of the values of religious society, side by side with the value of fulfillment of commandments, is the social trend. So, for example, is the demand not to retire from the public and the aspiration to be "a kingdom of priests and a holy people" – that fulfillment of the commandments must not only fall on the individual, but on the entire nation. In addition, Judaism necessitates long-term intergenerational action, with the individual not acting as a single person, but rather as part of his people.

---

[16] A movement that was part of the Enlightenment Movement in Western Europe and symbolized the rationalization of Jewish traditional culture through Liberalism (for details: M. Broyer, 1987). This movement symbolizes a breakthrough to the life of orthodox Jewry today (A. Fishman, 1990, p. 31).
[17] See also Ruth Gabizon, 1998.

In the '*The Religious Kibbutz Book*' (Admonit, 1962a, p. 13), it was written that the People of Israel constitute a volume in itself, and the very creation of the individual in the image of G-d shapes the nature of his life and also constitutes a goal for the social perspective of Judaism. In this society, there is a goal of struggling over the shaping of the image of the world and the aspiration to fix it by taking action in it.

In '*The Religious Kibbutz Book*' (Admonit, 1962a, p. 239), it was written that the special role of the religious kibbutz is "in the creation of a reformed religious public" [18]. A. Fishman (1990) claims that there are 3 cycles in the collectivist orientation of the religious kibbutz members: the national-pioneer, the socialist, and the Halachic. At the head of the hierarchy is the Halachic cycle, while the national-pioneer collective and the socialist collective serve the Halachic order of the modern religious community.

Ruth Gabizon (1998, 135, p. 217) determines that identification of the religious kibbutz as being both Jewish-religious and democratic is actually a solution – the extent of its possibility and justification as a way to establish settlement that will be both Jewish and democratic and just, and it seems that the religious kibbutz justifies this aspiration.

The people of *Hapoel HaMizrahi*, who brought about the religious kibbutz, attempted to contradict the religious validity of the traditional social order and tried to establish a new social order. In this new order, self-manual labor, economic roles, mutual help, cooperation and equality were done in the social order – for religious values and norms of a new culture [19].

Rabbi Y. Bernstein, one of the first ideologists of the 'Torah and Work' movement, writes: "All of our essence is in contrast to 'it just is'. Our movement is not just religious, just national, just socialistic, but instead religious-national-socialistic, and these words are not joined by an 'and', a kind of mixture of different foundations, but three words that are one point of view – and that is Judaism. Not just a religion, with room for the division of authorities, *i.e.*, up to here is the heavenly authority and from here on is the kingdom of flesh and blood – this is the religion of Moses and Israel, that encompasses the entire life of a person, a nation, and a world, in one and only authority, the authority of the King of the World, the authority of the Torah, the Torah of life, from the source of the life of the world. 'When you sit in your home, and when you are on the road, when you lie down and when you

---

[18] This in contrast to those who aspire to create "the new Jew", where the goal was 'revival of the Torah' in the public collective plane out of renewed religious consciousness with established religious foundations (A. Fishman, 1990, p. 11).

[19] For example: in the normative-social plane, work was perceived as a divine entity, "A life of work is … not only a means to the Torah, but the Torah itself" (*Beruchuni*, 1931, p. 56).

get up' " (Rabbi Y. Bernstein, 1933, pp. 7-8). In the 3 [rd] Conference of the Religious Kibbutz that took place in Sde Eliyahu and where the subject of education was discussed, M. Una (1945) suggested the ideal formula of education in the religious kibbutz: "A Torah scholar, a pioneer, and a citizen" [20]. This formula lies in contrast to the ideal of the traditional Jew - the 'Torah scholar' - "a diligent scholar whose occupation is the Torah" as well as the ideal of "just a good Jew[21]".

The role that distinguishes the religious kibbutz from the other kibbutz movements is that of "creation of a religious public". Within the framework of this role, members of the religious kibbutz are asked to dedicate themselves to fulfill the religious-kibbutz creation by personal fulfillment on existing kibbutzim and the establishment of new ones – out of the demand to maintain complete lives of Torah, partnership, and self-labor. These values raised difficult dilemmas that were in collision with a variety of values contained in the religious kibbutz[22].

Over the years, a rational norm was institutionalized in almost all the 'problematic' situations, although not always according to the criteria of the two ideological-religious dimensions, and, in general, years passed until a solution was found. And the rule was putting the seal of Halachic approval on the social-moral arrangement created by the secular kibbutz society. The Halachic ruling leaned on one of the perspectives of Judaism: that the Torah is a living Torah, a way that always refers to the concrete reality and according to this approach, "The Torah will never have a head-on collision with reality in such a way that the needs of life will be damaged" (Y. Amital, 2000, p. 45).

---

[20] According to Aryeh Fishman (1990, p. 134), this term was coined by Prof. Simon in a lecture he gave in Germany in 1934. The main points of the lecture were published in 1986 by Azriel Zamush (translator), *Amudim* 514, pp. 59-64.

[21] Binyamin Ish Shalom (2000, p. 34) mentions a famous catch-phrase credited to Dr. Yosef Burg (leader of the National Religious Party, served as chairman of the Knesset and as a minister in the Israel government), who said that the most important component in 'religious-Zionism' is the hyphen. This saying reflects the popular perspective about the nature of the movement, which wisely connects totally different points of view in a way that addresses the practical needs of the religious public on the one hand, and that gives expression to its different objects of identification, on the other hand. According to Binyamin Ish Shalom (2000) "the essence of the uniqueness of Zionism in its ability to maintain this connection, stems from this expression".

[22] The tangible problems facing the religious kibbutz on the normative plane when it built its pioneer settlements, in the format of the secular kibbutz, were problems that were created from the power of the collision between two groups: Halachic norms (those related to Sabbath and holiday observance, and those related to the agricultural farm) and rational-functional norms. In other words, those that were meant to guarantee services on the Sabbath and the holidays as on ordinary weekdays. For example, on the subjects of electricity and water, when many solutions in the Halachic norm lean on the 'breaking an observance if a life is at stake' and 'doubt if a life is at stake'. Details about the problematic situations were given in 1947, in "*The Religious Conference of the Religious Kibbutz*" - ten years after the beginning of the religious kibbutz settlement [*News about the Religious Kibbutz*, 41 (44), 1947, p. 3]. Examples of Halachic problems connected to the Sabbath: milking cows, gathering eggs, electric failure in the hatchery, irrigation from the eve of the Sabbath, guard duty using a vehicle, carrying weapons, etc. Further details: M. Or, 1987, pp. 83-110).

The very creation of a conflict between Halachic norms and the pioneer norms taking shape, testified to the sense of confidence of the religious pioneers, that they had the strength to dispel the tension of their experience and as per the opinion of M. Una (1965, pp. 26-27), this was from their grasp of the Halacha as being dynamic and its new revelations as the oral Torah.

The clear-cut expression of the connection between Judaism and modernization is brought to expression in the religious kibbutz (A. Fishman, 1990, p. 6), where they developed new religious symbols and new interpretation of the religious culture according to current values.

The perception of culture in the religious kibbutz was not and is not limited to Judaic subjects only. The religious kibbutz refers to any intellectual and practical activity "that brings the person to recognize his Creator and to recognize the world that we live in" as long as the activity does not clash with Halachic norms (Yair, 1963, p. 238)[23].

C. Coeducation in the religious kibbutz

Mixed education (boys and girls together) on the religious kibbutz is called 'coeducation' and not by coincidence. Except for Halachic, educational, and religious questions – there are also issues of women's equality and the cooperative idea that stands at the basis of the social life of the kibbutz.

The kibbutz school is an extension of the religious kibbutz; through it, the kibbutz attempts to transmit its tradition of values to the next generation. From its beginning, the kibbutz movement espoused the idea of equality between the sexes as one aspect of general equality and, therefore, it was perceived from a theoretical point of view as the ideal social structure to achieve equality between the sexes, since the network of values was equal, membership in the group - personal, and equal rights promised to every male and female member (R. Bar Yosef, 1994, p. 175).

A. Barzel (1984) in describing the components of the kibbutz point of view, points out that at the beginning of its existence, kibbutz coeducation [24] declared its desire to create a 'new man' who would be a member of the 'new society'. The results of the education of the new man were meant (among other things) to reduce the gap between girls and boys – a gap that the founders saw as being the result of the old, traditional education, and they wanted to change it

---

[23] And Yair continues (1963, ibid) "… Jewish and secular subjects, sports and art – all all contribute to the activation of man, to the reform of society" (the repetition of the word 'all' is emphasized in the original). And see Fishman (1990, p. 139) who mentions the belief of the founders of the religious kibbutz in the ability to dissipate the tension between pioneering and Halachic norms.

[24] Meaning here the "non-religious" kibbutzim.

radically. The kibbutz educational system has always espoused an educational viewpoint of non-separation between the sexes, therefore, from its earliest steps – education was equal for all the children. This perspective caused discord between the educational point of view and its directed educational expression[25].

It is the same on the religious kibbutzim: all the means of education – the methods and institutions – are an expression of the perspective, the social perception and social/political conditions. The religious kibbutz sees its brand of education as the outline of a program for the education of generations who will have the ability to maintain a society with the values and principles of behavior (religious, moral, and social) envisioned by the founders of the movement. The success of the educational/cultural trends depends greatly on if it wisely created for itself educational tools and institutions that will give fitting expression to these trends.

In the name of the above-mentioned principles, the religious kibbutzim established their own educational institutions that were different not only in content but also in form [26]. The establishment of religious-kibbutz schools raises the question of coeducation: is coeducation on the religious kibbutz really necessary for the success of education in the religious kibbutz in the areas of pioneering, work, society, etc.? The answer to this question is the subject of debate. Some think that yes, coeducation is a necessity because kibbutz life is based on a mixed adult society with equal rights and they have to prepare the children for this way of life (Una, 1963; Ahituv, 1980; Drori, 1991; Kutner, 1991). In contrast to this outlook, there are those who disagree (Cohen, 1963; Cohen, 1979; Markovitz, 1980). Those who espouse coeducation claim that "the establishment and existence of a society built on the cooperation of all its members, both males and females, is not possible without educational action aiming directly towards it… it has great significance to the society" (Una, 1963). The great significance to the society stems from the fact that the adult society is mixed in the farming-economic field, in the public work field, and in the social field, therefore, the youngsters should be prepared for this kind of life.

In the opinion of Kutner (1991, p. 161), the best preparation will be through joint and controlled growth and development of both sexes, while separate education will cause a sharp and fast transition of the students upon completion of their studies – from a one-sex society to a mixed adult society. This transition can cause turmoil for the student.

---

[25] This is backed up in the confession of Tzroya Ayala, 2001, pp. 13-17.

[26] Obviously content is significant but it happens that form actually gives tangible expression to what is unique and renewing, such as: the "*heder*"- as being fundamentally connected to life in the diaspora.

Una (1963, p. 265) does not settle only for supporting coeducation but also speaks out against separate education. In his opinion, the transition to separate education in the schools of the religious-kibbutz will lead to abundant problems. True, according to him, there is recognition of the need for broad differentiation inside the kibbutz but "to demand separate education instead, is to throw away the baby with the bathwater" (ibid, p. 267) [27]. The demand for coeducation for the two sexes was accepted not because of arguments about simplicity and lack of complexity in the means of education of the Yeshiva [28] (Goldman, 1976), not because of arguments about the need for kibbutz children to work on the farm (Hayut, 1959), and not even because of what Admonit wrote (1977, p. 99) – that there is a risk in focusing on "mono-tendentious education as Yeshiva education that will come at the expense of other existing achievements in the areas of security, the farm and society". According to Prof. Bar-Lev (1992), what led to a decision in his time as well as many years afterward, was the claim of Hayut that the directing of boys to Yeshiva high schools [29] did not really present a solution because then "one has to worry about the girls, and the sizable number of boys who will not be absorbed in Yeshiva for long periods of time" (M. Hayut, 1959, p. 156).

A staunch opponent of coeducation is Yedidya Cohen (1963). In his opinion, even the adult society of the religious kibbutz should not be mixed and "separate education in public domains (*i.e.*, school, youth movements, the Israeli army) alone – is not at all dangerous to society or its individuals" (pp. 193-195). To reinforce his opinion, the writer claims in a different article (Cohen, 1979, p. 372) that many members of the religious kibbutz received a religious, non-kibbutz, high school education, meaning that most of them graduated from educational frameworks with separate learning – and this did not damage their ability to live in a kibbutz society. The writer also sees separation of the sexes as a weapon and counter-means of religious-kibbutz society against the permissiveness that is all around and which has a profound influence. In his opinion, educational separation will facilitate the finding of a path to preserve those values that appear to be important, during integration into the general. It should be emphasized that Yedidya Cohen thinks that women have equal rights in all areas of activity but, in his opinion, the obligations are not equal, and the roles of the two sexes are not identical. In his article "*Thoughts on coeducation*" (1963), the writer explains that "each according to his needs" also applies in respect to coeducation/separate education. The very

---

[27] And see M. Armon (1963) who claims that "the establishment of a yeshiva … *i.e.*, separation of boys and girls in school, is possible for a particular period only (maybe one year). Extension of this period will cause social and professional problems".

[28] An explanation for the term and its significance as a place of study intended for boys only – then in the 50s.

[29] An explanation for the concept and its repercussion to the internal argument on the kibbutz.

separation in the educational frameworks will distance the general permissiveness from the religious-kibbutz students and help make it loathsome to them[30].

With the passing of the years, more and more voices are heard expressing a lack of confidence in the educational system of coeducational high schools and their goals – mainly in connection to teaching religious observance, and they are pressuring the establishment and the kibbutzim to formulate a different educational solution. According to Shefaram (1990), the climax of this lack of confidence and these pressures was the demand to establish a Yeshiva high school for the religious kibbutz. The demand flared up on the scene in 1976, at the 17th Conference. The religious kibbutz accepted the suggestion in part and agreed to allow a five-year trial program of students from Kfar Etzion[31] with the Yeshiva high school in Efrat.

The second flare-up occurred in anticipation of the Educational Conference of 1992, when parents demanded from the establishment appropriate solutions for their desired educational route, one that would supply them the "educational product" they wanted. This request raises the dilemma of choosing between coeducation or cancelling it to some extent, in order to achieve the best for some of the children. This is evidence that there are cracks in seeing coeducation as the highest value in educational considerations. In addition to the problem of permissiveness that is all around and which heavily influences mixed society on the religious kibbutz, there is also the Halachic aspect: there is no confirmation in our sources for this reality of social and educational integration between boys and girls. Y. Kutner (1991, p. 161) claims that coeducation existed among religious communities even before the establishment of the religious kibbutz. There are precedents for this taken from the separate ultra-orthodox communities in Germany, where mixed learning took place even though it had never been acceptable in Judaism[32].

---

[30] Markovitz (1980) from Kfar Etzion sides with Cohen out of consideration of the struggle against sexual permissiveness and the need to strengthen the boundaries between them (ibid, p. 59).
And see also the stand of G. Ben Dov (1991) and Alexander (1992) who claims: "Religious atmosphere and educating for experiences and identification, are easier and more natural when the sexes are separated". In her opinion, the framework of the religious school is convenient for drawing the advantages from the separation (without damage from the disadvantages), since this will fall only on the learning framework, and social activities will remain mixed. In this way, the side effects related to total separation will be prevented. And so the opinion of Shlomo Rosenfeld (1992) who suggests: "We will allow the youngsters to occupy themselves during the years of learning only when it comes to learning-related subjects, and we will leave the connection between them for the time of social activity outside the educational framework". A similar direction is described by H. Gadish (1992): "Coeducation disturbs concentration … because the different learning temperament of the boys is dominant in the classroom" or "even the best teacher cannot overcome problems of discipline … due to the excessive closeness between boys and girls" and even more: "Coeducation disturbs the emotional, learning, and religious development of our children".
[31] One of the kibbutzim in the Union of Religious Kibbutzim.
[32] As a fact, the story is given of the establishment of the "Horev" School in Jerusalem in 1934 by enlightened ultra-orthodox Jews from Germany.

Regarding the system of coeducation used by the religious kibbutz in its institutions, it is not only determined by educational ideology and trends, but the implemental/organizational aspect led to many of the kibbutz decisions[33].

The recognition that it is an obligation to add new methods and programs in order to strengthen the system so that it will stand up to the changes of the times, caused a change in the grasp of the religious kibbutz regarding its mixed, coeducational path. These changes are testimony to the crack in the dominance of the collectivist orientation in the religious kibbutz.

D. The changes

During the last few years, a lack of uniformity in normative patterns and a rising pluralistic trend have appeared in kibbutz society (Topol, 1995; Ben Rafael, 1996). This situation raises many questions about the future of the kibbutz. These questions also intensify in the wake of the opinion of Reimer (1995) who sees as one of the prominent characteristics of the modern era the young people [34] who don't see themselves as being committed to continue the path of their parents and who want to choose their own way [35]. The weight of these young people in bringing on changes is emphasized in the study of D. Argaman (2003, p. 163): What is common to the kibbutzim that have undergone change is the demographic crisis following the leaving of the children and the fear of the aging of the settlement[36].

Several factors contributed to the change: economic perspectives [37], new ideologies, and the development of new behavioral norms within the expanses of the kibbutz. From an ideological point of view, those espousing change claimed that the kibbutz structure harms sensitive and psychological areas [38], and exacts too high a price in the area of the individual's

---

[33] Simcha Friedman (1960, p. 28) raises the issue of the double costs for separate education. And see the protest of Yedidya Cohen (1979, p. 148) who opposes decisions of this kind.

[34] On the one hand, the gap between the generation of the children and that of the parents is emphasized (Rozner et al., 1978) and on the other hand, the reduction of the gap between the kibbutz children and the children of other groups in Israeli society, is noted (M. Dror, 1990). This is also the opinion of Avy Kadosh in his study (1998) and he adds that the growing gap between parents and children is described by the children as "also and mainly the gap between them and the kibbutz" as symbolizing what is static, and this although the kibbutz sees itself as a changing society.

[35] S. Ravid (1992) and B. Rafael (1996) point out that the young people, who are the leaders of change, absorbed a vague and tentative message about the kibbutz ideology and that is what allowed them to lead the change. Dar (1993) points out that the search of the young people for clear messages led them to more easily identify with the generation of the founders (their grandparents) than with their parents, since their parents were born into the situation and were its product and less motivated by ideology. Avrahami (1998, p. 53) points out that in the social experience of the young people and in their discourse with society, they interpret the values in their way and all of these influence their lack of ability to form a commitment to the kibbutz.

[36] He claims that the initiation of differential salary changed the demographic trend only in a few kibbutzim.

[37] These things are carried and pushed by representatives of the senior class in the economic sector, who are the true agents of change (U. Livyatan, 1994; M. Topol, 1995).

[38] They demanded a measure of conformity, reduced personal spontaneity, and reduced the need for the development of intimate friendships and in addition: fewer conflicts with parents during the teenage years

autonomy[39]. The norm of equality is revealed, along with its advantages, as leading to a weakening of aspirations for individual achievements. Economic security and kibbutz support do not encourage the development in the individual of a sense of responsibility for his fate.

The need for economic streamlining also sets the order of values in such a way that puts more emphasis on profits – on making a living (as an essential value for survival) as having higher independent value than the actual work[40].

Individualism is one of the main components characterizing the modern era (J. Friedman, 1995) and to a large degree, it weakens the connection between social structure and the life style of the individual. In the 80s, one of the main areas in which changes occurred on the kibbutz was fulfillment of the professional ambitions of each individual (Avrahami, 1998, p. 13). The desire to work outside of the kibbutz (Palgi and Sharir, 1997) and going outside the kibbutz to external schools to learn in the name of self-fulfillment and not necessarily the needs of the society[41] (Ben Rafael, 1996, p. 47) – are also an expression of more freedom and independence for the individual.

David Argaman (2003) said that among the changes that won the support of the kibbutz members on internal kibbutz matters, was those that concentrated on having the young people support the system of unequal compensation. In their opinion, the individual can thus extend his ability to fulfill his desires and decide how much to exert himself at work and thus earn a higher compensation.

Change did not skip over the world of education. During the years of coeducation, the family moved from the periphery of education to its center, and the parents' house "won" the unspoken battle against the children's house, at whose center was the *metapelet* (Lieberman and Avrahami, 1991; R. Plotnick, 1998, pp. 84-99)[42].

intensified problems of indivualization.

[39] On this, Avishai Grossman (2003, p. 159) admits that the belief was: "The kibbutz before everything, even at a personal price". According to Talmon-Graber (1980), the personal ambitions did not disappear, but were pushed aside for "better days", when there would be financial stability.

[40] Yoram Krol (1994a, p. 55): The problem is not only financial, it is social. Finances is a social activity. Economic streamlining is a fundamental subject representing an important change when the members come to determine their status in relation to the changes. Differentially, the individual is given full responsibility for earning a living.

[41] According to the research of Ben Rafael (1996, ibid), the people under investigation admitted that even when they considered the needs of the kibbutz in relation to choosing areas of study, it stemmed from personal desire: to be considerate of the needs of the kibbutz, and not from placing the needs of the kibbutz before personal desire.

[42] The family – Today the inclination for the family as a primary group abandoned by man, is emphasized. Under the pressure of the women of the second generation of the kibbutz, and since they personally experienced the arrangement of sleeping in the children's house – the demand rose from the kibbutz to change to a family sleeping arrangement. Tzvi Ben Horin (1987, p. 32) claims that this course was an "existential alternative" and in his opinion, the tendency to return to the family structure stems from ideological change.

If in the past the pioneering, national, and social goals were emphasized, nowadays private ambitions whose main purpose is to create a solid financial base, are intensifying. It seems that, on the one hand, the family cells are a cause of stability that mediate between the individual and the general group (M. Rozner and S. Gatz, 1996), but we cannot ignore the power of the home in pushing for success in learning as an important key to progress and material success in life.

The transition to a family sleeping arrangement was a most significant revolution on the kibbutzim. It brought about change in all the work arrangements, in the roles of the caretakers and in the distribution of roles in the family [43]. It cannot be ignored that there is also a phenomenon of change in family planning (S. Fogel-Bijoy, 1994, p. 192) – expressed as a lower birthrate than in the past as well as a rise in the age that people get married and have children.

The transition to a family sleeping arrangement intensified the expanse of tension and friction between the family aspect and the caregiving-educational aspect [44], and a new balance between these systems has still not been created (A. Avrahami, 1994, p. 234). Organizational change was made [45], but the need for change in the grasp of the role of educational factors - something that necessitates a differently structured children's house [46] and a different type of *metapelet* [47] - was not taken into consideration. "It turns out that there are empty spaces that were not filled and a renewed balance between the systems (education and family) has not been created" (A. Avrahami, 1994, ibid, p. 235).

In the 90s, many kibbutzim began to hire *metapelets* from local non-kibbutz settlements. This process intensified the diminishing of the role of the *metapelet* (G. Levin, 1997, pp. 96-114) and raised the status of the family as an educational factor. This was perceived by Lieberman and Avrahami (1991, pp. 71-90) as being likely to damage the educational messages that the kibbutz relays.

---

[43] The transition to the parents' house was not merely technical. It included the transfer of responsibility for the care and education of the children to the parents. In the wake of this, there has been a trend of reduction in authority of public bodies and reduction in the power of those holding public positions (Ben Rafael, 1996). In addition, in the area of distribution of jobs between the sexes, it emerges that most of the household tasks are the domain of the women but there is a clear trend with the men, who are parents of children, taking an increasingly growing part in family tasks.

[44] See also in Yehezkel Dar (1994, p. 223) and even in M. Segal (1975).

[45] The 'after-school club house' emptied of its functions (both educational and caregiving) and the 'age group' as a structure expressing an educational approach, was cancelled.

[46] An after-school children's house? A club?

[47] A babysitter? Counselor? Educator? - Each suggestion is a semantic term expressing a trend.

The kibbutz school was so much an integral factor in the community that each school event and party was perceived as collective and included all the members. With time, the status of the school was somewhat diminished and it turned into a regional educational institution almost like any other school in the country. This means that from a non-differential, non-selective educational institution, it (mainly the high school) turned into a school located on the kibbutz but being almost like any other regional high school in the country (A. Avrahami, 1998a, pp. 119-137). It should be pointed out that the school reserves the right to test those accepted into its ranks, but because of the small number of kibbutz children in each grade, there is a dilemma of size vs its battle for existence. This leads to concessions being made, and in their wake, ideological prices are paid[48].

The elementary schools still manage to maintain themselves as non-selective educational institutions (for kibbutz members), and appreciation of moral behavior and contribution to society is no less regarded than learning achievements. The relationship between the students and staff is also personal/friendly and that exacts a price in both directions.

Aaron Yadlin (1994, p. 243) suggests also maintaining the uniformity of the educational factors during the processes of change. He claims that "kibbutz education today is not adapted for change. There is a preference for structural themes and less attention to content". In his opinion, the kibbutz content as ideology is not well enough known. "The assumption that we can count only on themes of structure is a wrong assumption that enacts a price of members leaving and less significant membership".

Today the kibbutz is becoming more heterogenic and has taken on the characteristics of a community. There has been a decrease in mutual trust, and the most difficult question about reciprocal relationships between the individual and society is raised: Does so and so really contribute to the best of his ability according to the rules of the market[49]?

In the past, the kibbutz was considered a way of life without money. The network of considerations is currently in transition from a collectivist to an individual approach. Financial considerations are made that guide behavior. It can be said that "Among the members, the approach of values in kibbutz life has been weakened in favor of an instrumental network of considerations (Ashush and Rappaport, 1999a, p. 51).

---

[48] For example, the messages of kibbutz education greatly decreased because of lack of relevance for the students from the outside (a study on this in Y. Dror and Y. Lieberman, 1994), as well as emphasis on the importance of learning achievements and success on the matriculation exams.

[49] A prominent example of change is the concept "outside origins" – once considered abominable and was rejected by the ideal of equality and cooperation. Today it is a popular state between the kibbutz members (E. Ben Rafael, 1986, pp. 148-150).

With the start of privatization, money has turned into a significant factor in the life of the kibbutz member and causes him to settle accounts and prevent waste. And he is dealing more and more with financial considerations than with the behavior of the members.

Ashush and Rappaport (1999a, p. 83): The network of considerations of the kibbutz member perceives the system as more external and supervisory than in the past. If in the past over-consumption was regarded as waste, today, the more a member manages to consume without paying, the more he sees it as a good way to take advantage of the system.

The change undermines confidence – there is lack of clarity, confusion, and even anxiety associated with the situation today. It looks like the traditional kibbutz ideology is no longer a source to identify with and to choose kibbutz life, and the most important factor for the sense of belonging to a place is the scenery, the feeling of home. …Anxiety is on the rise, especially among the generation of the founders[50] …

In their research, Palgi and Sharir (1997, p. 23) discussed a growing perception to support the strengthening of the individual against the collective although it is important (according to 75% of those questioned in the study) to be in a community that maintains a high level of mutual responsibility. Most of those questioned (about 66%) were doubtful if they can achieve this in their kibbutz.

Today, those supporting change do not express a clear, unequivocal stand. There are those who support far-reaching change, even to the point of disbanding the partnership and the desire to live in a communal settlement, while there are those who support slow, controlled changes out of an effort "not to lose the kibbutz" and in an effort to look for another kibbutz identity[51]". They suggest allowing the individual more freedom while promising cooperation and maintenance of a uniform and fair standard of living. "It is important to have 'red lines'

---

[50] Who see the damage to them as double – the destruction of their dream of symbolic significances (such as the damage to the institution of the dining room – see Ashush and Rappaport (1999, pp. 86, 90-99) and D. Argaman (2003, p. 167), as well as the damage to financial security as a result of the privatization.

[51] The kibbutzim are still in the stage of friendlier-than-ever negotiations, and it is hard to see it as a final and stable model. In every kibbutz, decisions are made in small steps and for limited periods of times, and in the end, these decisions are corrected according to pressures created in the process. And it seems that there are two main perceptions about these changes: those who espouse and find in it an opening for a sense of responsibility and personal control, and others who see it as an intermediate stage to the transition to differential returns and a transition according to the principles of the capitalistic market.

Yuval Ashush and Tal Rappaport (*An Examining Eye*, 6, 1999, p. 10) "In light of the distribution of the changes, especially in the area of privatization of consumption, there is no doubt that support of the basic kibbutz principle has been weakened (each according to his needs), but a consensus has not been formed around a new principle of identification … therefore, it is still too early to predict the continuation of the process (Ashush and Rappaport, p. 10).

that should not be crossed" (A. Avrahami, 1998, p. 48). There is a third group of people who want to live in the traditional kibbutz but don't believe that it is possible.

The change and women

A historical, but superficial, look at the status of women in the kibbutz movement will reveal that already from the beginning, the subject of women was characterized by contradictions in both ideas and behavior. According to Rabbi Bar-Yosef (1994, p. 175), one section that was consistently repeated in the protocols of most of the conferences – namely discussions on 'the problem of the female kibbutz member', is evidence of the failure of the movement to guarantee the same standing to male and female members [52]. It was found that today, expressions of inequality on the kibbutz [53] are similar to non-cooperative societies in: (A) professional deployment; (B) public roles; and (C) control of resources.

"As a collective society, the woman remains, naturally, equal to the man. As a worker, she is usually found at a lower standing. As a "citizen", she is pushed to the sidelines. In this situation, there are sharp contrasts in a community in which equality between the sexes is a central value" (E. Ben Rafael, 1986, p. 147). Today there is continuous sexual polarization but there is also the admission of women into non-standard jobs – which is connected to their level of education and the lack of manpower on the kibbutz. All in all, there are no women in positions of power. In a society that always talks about economic changes, the women have no place in leading economic positions (S. Fogel-Bijoyi, 1994, p. 201) [54]. Michal Palgi (1994, p. 199) claims that "admission is difficult because this is more or less a closed 'clique'". Eliezer Ben Rafael (1994, p. 196) claims that women are not recognized in the change processes. In my opinion, the problem is not in the distribution of jobs but in the status that society grants to the professions in which women are involved[55].

It seems that the alternative to the feeling of the women and the strengthening of their involvement in the community was actually achieved by strengthening family life (the house

---

[52] Even the use of the word "problem" indicates segregation of the subject of the status of the woman member from the more general subject of equality and inequality on the kibbutz. In addition, there was never a section found in any conference called: 'The problem of the male kibbutz member', as a subject referring to the status of the men.

[53] Indeed, see in Fogel-Bijoy (ibid, p. 193) who sees the crisis of the status of women on the kibbutz as part of the crisis of the general society.

[54] Bar Yosef (1994, 1978) distinguishes between money-earning jobs and non-productive jobs. And the penetration of women kibbutz members into the male-production areas of work, is miniscule and is not enough to create new norms. There is still a division of traditional 'inside' and 'outside' work.

[55] (Is the management of a nursery as important as the management of a garage, factory, or work in a dairy farm?)

is bigger, the children are home), thus fostering the self-image of a housewife (Bar Yosef, 1994, p. 178)[56].

Aviva Zamir (1994): Nowadays there is a vigorous demand by women to act in this direction ... and there are the beginnings of initiatives to expand the gamut of professions for women.

Vivien Silver (1994, p. 201) is pessimistic about the way to reach sexual equality in the kibbutz organizational system as we know it today. In contrast, Y. Dar (1994a) believes that women have the power to change what exists. Yehuda Amir (1994, p. 209) believes that change depends on the atmosphere in which the woman grew up and her faith in herself. From this it follows that education is significant in leading change related to equality.

The religious kibbutz

Change did not skip over the religious kibbutzim. Already at the 22nd Conference of the Religious Kibbutz, Amnon Shapiro from Kibbutz Tirat Tzvi suggested that "the conference pick an ad-hoc steering committee that will give momentum to the issue of the nature of the cooperation … and to ask the question: how far can a kibbutz be stretched and still remain a kibbutz" (A. Shapiro, Discussion on Cooperation, vol. 39, Sheet 11, pp. 348-349)[57].

First steps [58] towards also dismantling the cooperation in education were taken at the Educational Conference in Yavne (1992), where a suggestion was raised allowing autonomy under limited conditions (number, control, and agreement with the cooperating school) to the kibbutzim to enable their children to learn in Torah schools outside the kibbutz[59].

Different researchers see the changes in the religious kibbutz structure as part of the broader change taking place in the religious world. Dr. Asher Cohen (1998) claims that the religious-kibbutz public is caught in a paradox, moving between two poles of change: old vs

---

[56] B. Friedan (1981) in her book The Second Stage, determines that feminists of the new generation are not prepared to give up family life and childcare but they demand the cooperation of the husbands.
And see and compare to Aviva Zamir (1994, pp. 182-183): "Obviously the men are prepared for equality in public jobs and activities, but it is not clear if they are also prepared for equality in the jobs in the fields of education, services, and full responsibility for the household". – "In this way, there is a limit to identifying between the sexes" (Zamir, p. 181).
[57] At the same conference, Micha Rosenthaler (pp. 342-346) quoted Amikam Osem: "Cooperation is a concession". Hanan Golan used this idea (at the same conference, p. 350) when he expressed his concern that "there are some who read it with the words backward, let's concede on the cooperation". And see also the decisions of the same conference (ibid, p. 401).
[58] Hana Gadish (1992a) in summarizing the conference, points out that the above-mentioned suggestion was accepted "when joined by demanders of absolute autonomy, maybe out of the desire not to create a tear in the movement, maybe out of the belief that when the time comes, it will be possible to expand it".
[59] This was a compromise offer in light of the broader offer that was received there on the first call. See also Moshe Maagan (1992).

sanctification of the new [60]. Tova Ilan (*She will Rise like a Lioness*, p. 30, at the 2nd Lavie Conference): Religious society is different today in its accentuations, concepts and lifestyles, from those remembered from fifty years ago. Cultural and religious discourse continues to change, and the demand emerges from different directions that the time has come to try to redefine the goals of religious Zionism.

---

[60] And there are those who claim (Y. Shorek, 1998, p. 57) that the religious crisis striking the national-religious society today stems from the member's inability to combine the Torah with life as we experience it today.

The Status of Women in Judaism

In order to investigate the division of the calling and roles between man and woman in Judaism, the structure of society and culture throughout 3500 years of Jewish history – would need to be examined.

D. Shalit (1998, p. 95) wrote: "During the earliest period of the nation in the Torah, the foundations of equality and hierarchy were all mixed up when referring to the status of the woman"[61].

He adds: "The forefathers and foremothers mentioned in Genesis are figures in whose relationships there was a clear foundation of equality in status, and even so, the central figure who acts is the man. Against the background of the centrality of the men in Biblical stories, the equal and active place of the woman is surprising [62]. During the period of our sages of blessed memory, the basic situation of the woman was determined as one of total dependence[63]. During the period of the exile, the basic position of the woman does not change (and in some cases, worsens), but new regulations emerge that change in a practical way the position of the woman and recognize her as an active personality[64]. During the new period, the woman's position in Judaism became contradictory, standing out in its contrast to the position of the woman in the general culture.

Since a comprehensive historical review cannot be done (at least not in the framework of this work), an attempt will be made to examine the legal-Halachic framework that refers to the division of roles and the state of attitudes and moods, mainly in the literature of the sages and some of the later literature – as it was here that the practical world of Judaism was designed for all times. In addition, the attitudes prevalent at the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century will be examined.

The reference to this issue in the literature of the sages is very complex. It contains different streams and emphasizes many issues. In order to present a complete and comprehensive outlook, there is need for a broad study of the different sides.

---

[61] S. Sira (2000, p. 20) points out that during the period of the Bible, the status of the woman rose to unparalleled levels compared to those in the continuation of cultural history. He gives as an example Sarah, who was the arbiter, as well as Rebecca, Rachel, Miriam, and Devorah – until Queen Esther.

[62] For example: No expression of wonder is mentioned regarding the functioning of Sarah, Rebecca, or Devorah, the judge (and even with Atelia, as the queen of evil – there are no reservations about her reign because she is a woman).

[63] A woman is not permitted to be a judge and Devorah is considered an exception to the rule.

[64] For example, ban imposed by Rabbi Gershom: "And Rabbi Gershom compared the power of the woman to the power of the man" (D. Shalit, 1998, p. 96, footnote at the bottom of the page).

In this work, only a few of these angles will be covered. In addition, the division of roles within the family belongs to how the location of the family in a person's life is perceived, and we will only emphasize some of that too.

A. Equality and the difference between the sexes

1) Man and woman: Equality – The point of departure for examining the difference between the positions of the man and the woman in Judaism – is equality [1]. "The rule is equality, only after that there are some areas in which there is no equality" – this referring to monetary laws (S. Avinar, **Talks of Rabbi Zvi Yehuda**, p. 1). The perception of the equal position between man and woman can be seen in two basic matters: one – equality before the law, and two – (and more essential): the spiritual potential. We meet the first one in Halacha (Jewish law) (Babylonian, **Baba Kamah**, 17, page 2) "In the writings woman is equal to man concerning all the punishments mentioned in the Torah … in the writings woman is equal to man concerning all the laws in the Torah [2] … in the writings woman is equal to man concerning all the punishments of death in the Torah …". From this we learn that from a comprehensive legal point of view, there is full equality in man and woman's legal status, and even if some areas will be found in which there is a difference between them, the framework of equality that determines the position of the woman, is still there.

Another plane of equality is in the spiritual potential. In the *Midrash* (**Midrash Shir Hashirim Raba**, D, 22) it says that "just as 600,000 [3] prophets emerged from Israel, so there were 600,000 prophetesses". In the intellectual-spiritual-holy peak that a Jew can reach, and that is the prophecy, the *Midrash* equates man to woman (S. Hirsch, in A. Weinrot, 2001, p. 79)[4].

This equality is also expressed in the story creation of man, in the verse describing the creation: "And the Lord created man in his own image, in the image of the Lord he created him. Male and female he created them" (**Genesis**, A, 27), "Man and woman as one belong to

---

[1] According to D. Shalit (1998, p. 76): The principle of equality for women leans on a broad moral premise which is: all people are of equal value.
[2] This refers to monetary laws for comparison and perusal: S. Valler (2001, p. 103-149), gave examples of equality in matters of law, assertiveness and the independence of women in money matters.
[3] 600,000 represents a number that indicates equality in the spiritual potential rather than being an exact number.
[4] Rabbi Hirsch (in: A Weinrot, ibid, Chapter 3) in: the **Book of Prayer**, about the words in the *Shema* prayer "And you will teach them to your sons" – 'The same understanding…and the same measure of knowledge that lead to true loyalty to the Torah and to fear of G-d… - this knowledge belongs to the enlightenment of the spirit and heart of our daughters just like our sons'.

the image of the Lord, they are two sides of the image of the Lord" (S. Aviner, (ed.), Talks of Rav Zvi Yehuda Kook, p. 1).

Our sages of blessed memory describe this in a physical way: man initially had two faces – one of man and one of woman, and only later they were separated.

The woman, like the men, stood at Mount Sinai and received the Torah. That is how the sages interpret the verse "So you will say to the House of Jacob and tell the children of Israel" (**Exodus**, 19, 3). According to Rashi, 'The House of Jacob' – this refers to the women".

Also during the "receiving of the Torah" for the following generations (*VaYakhel* = (And He Assembled), the entire community assembles: "Assemble the people – the men, the women, and the children" (**Exodus**, 19, 3).

In summary, we will learn that the status of the man and woman and their place in society – be it legal, cultural, or related to spiritual potential – are equal[5].

2. Man and woman: Differences – There are areas in which differences are detected between man and woman. These areas are related to the perception of the man and woman as essentially different from each other (D. Shalit, 1998, p. 84) as well as the difference in the Halachic-legal perception of them. All of these create and reflect a difference in the social status between man and woman.

On the one hand, we find: "Women are of light intelligence" (Babylonian, **Shabbat**, 33, p. 2) [6] or "The woman has no intelligence except at the spinning wheel" (Babylonian, **Yoma**, 66, p. 2), and in contrast: "This teaches that the Lord Blessed be He gave abundant wisdom to the woman more than to the man" (Babylonian, **Nida**, 45, p. 1) [7]. This ambivalence reflects the

---

[5] See, for example, the claim of S. Valler (2001, pp. 187-188) that "all the women mentioned were related to well-known men, however, even though there are few examples, they prove the very existence of an egalitarian perception – women were not disqualified from participating in any field and were not considered as lacking intellectual abilities…".

[6] **'Women are of light intelligence'** was written in depth by S. Valler (2001, pp. 20-27). For a comprehensive clarification of the significance of the terms and their interpretation, see A. Weinrot (2001, pp. 51-55), who claims that light-minded' means the ability to have 'flexibility' and a practical, humane, and soft approach.

[7] On "… abundant wisdom to the woman more than to the man" see D. HaCohen (1991, p. 74): The role of the man is to apply his strengths into practice. As it says in *Bereishit Raba*, 11, 7: "Everything that was created in the 6 days of creation requires an act". From this the conclusion: "A woman who is naturally intelligent must apply it in practice". And A. Weinrot (2001, Chapter 3) who writes that there are additional sources and brings as an example the words of Rabbi Hirsch about "Whatever Sarah tells you, listen to her". That…"A woman is able to reach a spiritual and exalted plane of prophecy no less than the man, and women were blessed with intuition that gives them an advantage in their judgment of human qualities… Reference to the intellectual ability of the woman is found in the Gemara (Brachot, 10, p. 2) that the Sunami woman immediately recognized that Elisha was a prophet – a man of G-d. Also in the case of On, son of Pelet, who was among the followers of Korah and was one of the wicked men, but he was not punished because of the wisdom of his wife (**Sanhedrin**, 109, p. 2 and ibid also 110, p. 1). For additional details on the wisdom of women, see A. Weinrot, ibid , pp. 45-46).

way the sages saw the emotional-spiritual-mental difference existing between man and woman. This difference has intellectual-emotional implications as well as implications of emotional maturity. These divisions between men and women, along with the principle of the obligation to maintain modesty (the Jewish woman is like a princess and must preserve her honor), which copes plainly with the most powerful human urges, create a difference between the obligations and rights of men and women and, in any event, a difference in social function is created[8].

Some of the public roles were not open to women. A woman could not serve as King of Israel (Maimonides, **Laws of Kings**, 1, Law 5). As for less official appointments, intensive discussions were held in recent times, with some deciding to allow women these appointments (Rabbi M. Eliyahu, 1986) [9] and others restricting the broadening of the possibility of her appointment (Rabbi Y. Rosen, 2001, pp. 44-53; Rabbi Y. Efrati, 1988).

The woman is not eligible to give some [10] of the testimonies (Maimonides, **Testimony**, Code of Law, Sign 7, paragraph 4). Despite this, she precedes the man in the urgency of the legal care she is entitled to: "There will be many plaintiffs before the judges … the trial of the woman precedes the trial of the man, because her shame is excessive…" (Maimonides, **Sanhedrin**, 21, Law 6).

Excessive shame and protection of the woman's honor make up the basis for giving precedence to the woman's livelihood. "Male and female orphans require a livelihood, first the female orphan is supported, and then the male orphan, since the male orphan can return to any place but the woman cannot" (Tosefta, **Ketovot**, Chapter 6, Verse 8). Or as it states in the *Midrash* "If someone dies and leaves sons and daughters … few assets, the girls will be nourished and the boys will beg" (**Baba Batra**, 9, Mishnah 1).

Rabbi Elinson of blessed memory (1977) summarized in his book "The Woman and the Commandments" the rules of the advantages of the man and woman. He lists the advantages of the man as being dependent on four factors: a) the physical factor; b) his role in life; c) his responsibility for the offspring; and d) the sanctity of the priesthood. The advantages of the

---

[8] There are areas in which the inferiority of women is dictated by law and they cannot reach equal or even similar positions to those of men (S. Valler, 2001, p. 14).
[9] According to Rabbi Y. Rosen (2001, p. 53): The prohibition only applies to offices of authority and coercion, but public positions acceptable in our times without authoritative rule + honorary appointments are not included in this category.
[10] In the opinion of T. Ross (1998, p. 462), determination of a fundamental Halachic distinction between the sexes does not necessitate its operation all along the way. "This is her will … there are ways to get the testimony of women in certain areas…".

woman are also divided into four factors: a) sensitivity; b) vulnerability; c) defect; and d) influence.

As an example to illustrate this point, it can be seen in the Mishnah (**Horiut**, Chapter 3, 47): "The man precedes the woman in being revived (this means saving him from danger, because he is required to perform other commandments), and in returning a lost object, and the woman precedes the man in being covered and in being rescued from captivity (because of the fear that she will be abused)[11]".

In summary: There is equality between man and woman in Judaism in principle, but a lack of equality functionally [12]. This stems from seeing them as two faces of the image of G-d, as equal partners in building the People of Israel who received the Torah, and as having a similar mission – the prophecy.

'Male and female' – are not two different things, but it seems that "this distinction between the different faces in the personality of man is a point of departure in the various sources. This distinction is not limited to the origin of the sexes, but the sages see this dichotomy between the various sides of humanity as a continuous process occurring since the creation of man and until the end of time[13]" (A. Weinrot, 2001, pp. 20-25; D. Shalit, 1998).

Along with this, they differ in the daily, social and Halachic functioning against the background of the physiological, emotional, and mental differences existing between them.

The Baal "Akeidat Yitzhak" emphasizes this two-sided view in his commentary of the portion in the Torah named *Vayetzeh* (And he went out). In his opinion, the names define the calling of the woman and her role [14]: In her two names 'woman' and Eve' it is explained that the woman has two purposes. The first, what the name teaches: woman – because she was taken from man and like him, she will be able to understand and have knowledge of things related

---

[11] Rabbi Shaar Yeshuv HaCohen (2001, pp. 168-174), in using the *Talmudic* term "The sages worked diligently on regulations concerning the daughters of Israel", details how regulations were formulated throughout the generations in order to ensure the status of the woman and her children, and a harmonious home and family within the framework of the institution of marriage. He admits that that this should be continued in additional regulations that will prevent additional feelings of discrimination (such as coercion of divorce).

[12] See also D. HaCohen (1991, p. 70): The personal difference has countless variables. On one level, the difference between the man and the woman, and on another level, the difference between a woman and her companion. This complexity is expressed both on the Halachic level and on the *Midrashic* level. On the Halachic level – moral equality is dominant, therefore, the obligations assigned to the women at Mount Sinai are equal in principle to the obligations of the men. On the *Midrashic* level, the sages went on in their commentaries to the endless variables that exist in the character of human beings and the human relationship behind them.

[13] D. Shalit (ibid, p. 84) explains his perception of the concept: "the two great lights".

[14] A broad discussion on his remarks in: A. Weinrot (2001, p. 40). Rabbi Feinstein (1986, *"Igrot Moshe* Responsa, *Orah Haim*, D, Simat 49) also refers to the two names Eve was called, and that the 'mother of all life' or the name woman were given to her as a choice – she can prefer to fulfill her spiritual calling or her reproductive calling…

to piety; the second: the matter of childbirth and her being a divine vessel marked for giving birth and raising children … Eve – the mother of all life (Rabbi Yitzhak Arama, 2001, 9th Gate).

These things teach us that one cannot discuss the question of the status of the man and the woman in Judaism without the need to understand the value of the family.

B. The value of the family

Contemporary culture raises doubts in relation to the essentiality of the traditional family and the need for it in the modern world. In Judaism, the family is a social value and order. The family contains the institutionalization and framing of one of man's strongest instincts – the sexual instinct, with the commandments and the Halacha refining it and weaving around it a complete network of obligations.

Maimonides writes (**Ishot**, A, 5-1) "Before the giving of the Torah, a man would meet a woman in the market, if he wanted to marry her, he would bring her into his house and take sexual possession of her - between him and himself - and she would be his wife. Since the Torah was given, Israel was commanded that if a man wants to take a woman, first he must buy her before witnesses and after that, she will be his wife, as it said: "If a man takes a woman and comes unto her".

The creation of an institutionalized framework and set of laws around the relationships between man and woman has been the order of Jewish life since the giving of the Torah. It is no longer a random, coincidental (and transitory) thing, but rather an organized and fixed legal order. This is a structure in which not only is excitement a passing thing, but there are permanent obligations anchored in the law "The man will be obligated to give her ten things and he will gain four things…" (Maimonides, **Ishot**, 12, Law 1).

It can be seen that the sages, in their positive perception of married life, brought about significant changes in favor of women and out of concern for their welfare and wellbeing but …not out of the desire to give them equality (Y. Hoftman, 1998)[15].

The sages see in the creation of the family nucleus not only a legal agreement, but spiritual completeness. "A man without a wife is without happiness, without blessings, without good… without Torah, without wisdom…without peace" (Babylonian, **Yebamut**, 62, p. 2). They see in the connection between the man and the woman the possibility of the 'induction of the divine presence'. "A man and a woman earned – the divine presence between them"

---

[15] On the positive attitude to married life, see also: D. Boyarin (1993) and also T. Ilan (1975).

(Babylonian, **Sotah**, 17, p. 1). The connection between a married couple is seen by the sages as permanent and arranged in Heaven. "Forty days before birth, a divine voice announced so and so woman will marry so and so man" (Babylonian, **Soteh**, Part 2, p. 1).

Rabbi A. Bar-Shaul (1977, p. 29) extracts from this: "The family is one unit. The woman is not a separate creation but rather part of the man. That is her name and that is her essence. The family is not a partnership aimed at carrying out a certain joint purpose, but rather "one unit", or as it says in the Scriptures (**Genesis**, 2, 24): "A man leaves his father and mother, and sticks to his wife and they become one body".

The importance of this framework and its value is expressed in: language, Halacha, the *Midrash*, and customs.

In language – The coming together between man and oman is not called a purchase, but a 'sanctification' – from the word meaning holy and spiritual enlightenment.

In Halacha – "And so the sages commanded that a man should honor his wife more than his own body and he should love her like his body …and he should talk to her pleasantly… and so they commanded the woman that she should honor her husband more … and that is the way of the daughters of Israel and the sons of Israel … and in these ways their dwelling should be fine and excellent" (Maimonides, **Ishot**, Ch. 15, Law 19).

In custom – It is accepted in Israel that everything should be done in order to bring peace between man and wife. "The bringing of peace between man and his wife" is one of the things for which we are rewarded in this lifetime. Even the name of the Lord is erased in the waters that brought on the curse in order to bring peace between man and wife.

In Midrash – It seems that it is best expressed in the metaphor of the sages in their commentary on the idea of the connection between man and his wife: "Anyone who divorces his wife first, even the sacrificial altar sheds tears over him" (Babylonian, **Gitin**, 4, 2).

The first commandment in the Torah, the commandment 'Be fruitful and multiply', which is called by the sages "the great commandment", takes shape in Jewish thought and law as a complete world, full of value and an educational trend.

It is impossible to discuss the traditional division of the roles between man and his wife, without understanding the value of the family.

C. Division of roles in the Jewish family

As it was written, the family is not only a technical connection of two people, but an independent unit with its own trends. This fact is one of the criteria for building a network for the division of the roles in the family. In other words, even though outside the family the role intended for the man and the woman and their social place is the same, within the family, the role will be different. For example, let us take the subject of the vows: In the case of an unmarried woman, her vows are permanent and binding, but in the case of a married woman – the vows are subject to the existence of her husband. An opposite example can be seen in the subject of the lighting of the Sabbath candles, which is an equal obligation of the man and woman (therefore an unmarried man is obligated to light Sabbath candles in his home), but within the framework of the family, this role is intended for the woman.

Division of the roles within the family is divided into many chapters. In this work, I will only refer to some of them.

1. Financial matters – The handling of the family's economic matters was intended at the onset for the husband. He is to support his wife, provide her with food, and fill all her needs. So Maimonides (*Mishnah Torah*, **Hilchot Ishot**, Ch. 12, Law 12) said: The man is obligated to give her ten things and they are: … food, clothing, to heal her if she gets sick, to redeem her if she is taken prisoner, to bury her if she dies…". It is understood that these obligations force the man to finance the needs of the home. In contrast, the sages awarded him four things (Maimonides, *Mishnah Torah*, **Hilchot Ishot**, Ch. 12, Law 3): that her salary goes to him, that whatever she finds goes to him, that he will use all of her assets during her lifetime, and if she dies before he does, he will inherit her". This means: The assets that the woman brings into their shared life is brought under the control and responsibility of the husband and he must work hard with them, produce profits from them and use the profits within the family framework. From this we learn that beyond the economic responsibility and the rights of the wife and husband, there is a trend in the Halacha rules to create "one bank account" and not split up the family's financial means.

It should be pointed out that these rules were established mainly for the benefit of the woman, and in any event, she has the right to forfeit some of them if she wants to. This possibility opens a door for the woman's financial independence even within the family. For example: "By saying I am not being fed and not doing" – she forfeits the providing of food by the husband, and she keeps her own salary. Obviously this structure is not desirable from a

Halachic point of view but it is possible. So the framework of the division of economic roles in the family is flexible and variable[16].

2. Decision-making – In economic matters, as stated, the steering wheel is given to the man, however, the sages gave advice about matters of decision-making within the family: that it should be done in cooperation and understanding and not as an arbitrary decision of only one side.

The sages used the language of the people to hint at this advice and said: "Your wife is short, bend down and whisper to her" (Babylonian, **Baba Metzia**, 59, p. 2). Rashi explained: "Your wife is small, bend down and listen to her".

Even in sanctified and spiritual matters, such as Torah study, cooperation is taught by Rabbi Ben Dorenu (S. Aviner, 1988): "True that if he is involved in Torah…it has great spiritual value…but this decision should not be made by him arbitrarily … but rather as a joint agreement, out of a good heartedness and mutual love".

3. Education of the children – The responsibility for educating the children and opening their religious world is placed - on the onset - on the father: "The father is commanded…to circumcise his son, redeem him, teach him Torah, marry him off and teach him a craft and some say even to teach him to swim" (Babylonian, **Kedushin**, 29, p. 1).

The rabbinical authorities were divided in their opinions whether the mother even has a Halachic obligation to educate her children (Talmudic Encyclopedia, value: education), however, even without a binding legal framework, it is understood that the mother has a vital role in shaping the personality of her sons and daughters. As the sages taught: "So you shall say to the house of Jacob – these are the women. Why the women first? Because they hurry to fulfill the commandments. Another thing: so that they will be leading their sons to the Torah" (**Shemot Rabah**, Ch. 28, Verse 2)[17].

D. Hacohen (1991, pp. 70-75) mentioned Rabbi Uziel (1953, p. 144) who saw the role of women in education as a privilege. This is his way of seeing the exemption of women from

---

[16] S. Valler (2001, p. 83) gives details on women who owned assets, money, or status. It is possible that these women drew their power from their economic or social status, and their actions do not present a picture of the reality of women in general in Jewish society during the period of the *Talmud*.
[17] Rabbi Firrer (1981, p. 131) refers to the fact that most of the teachers involved in education are women and they must have a broad and rich education in order to educate the next generation – i.e., according to his approach: The study of Torah and the education of women is a matter that should take root from the beginning.

the 'Thou shall' commandments that are linked to time as "a concession and a privilege of the woman[18]".

The sages also saw in this the big calling of the women and the reason for the large reward promised them in the next world. "Women – what do they earn? – the bringing of their children to synagogues" (Babylonian, **Berachot**, 17, p. 1). And in general, the sages emphasized the intensity of the influence of the woman on the all-inclusive spiritual atmosphere of the home, and saw the success of the children of the house (spiritually and socially) – as to the credit of the women[19].

"There was once a pious man who was married to a pious woman and they could not conceive a child. Since they felt that they were of no benefit to the Lord, they divorced each other. The pious man married an evil woman who turned him into an evil man, while the pious woman married an evil man and turned him into a pious man. Because everything comes from the woman" (*Bereishit Raba*, Ch. 17, Verse 7).

The story of Rabbi Akiva and his wife, Rachel, is also well known, since it was she who pushed him to greatness and her husband pays her tribute "what is mine and what is yours – is hers". From this, it is clear that serious coordination and sharing of the responsibility of educating the children is necessary between the husband and wife.

4. Care of the children – The woman's physiological structure, the fact that she bears the children and the essentiality of the relationship between her and her children in their first days – create a perception of both a mission and a duty.

It is written in the *Midrash* (*Bereishit Raba*, 31): "And Hana spoke her heart – Rabbi Elazer said in the name of Rabbi Yossi Ben Zimra: about matters of her heart. She said before the

---

[18] The rule is that women are exempt from the 'Thou shall' commandments linked to time (**Berachot**, 20, p. 2). Why are they exempt? After all, according to the Torah, a woman is equal to a man in the commandments. This is answered by D. Hacohen (1991, p. 74) that there is a case when a man is also exempt from carrying out commandments: "He who is busy with a commandment, is exempt from a commandment" (**Sukkah**, 2, 4) and also (**Sukkah**, 5, 1). In other words, when two commandments come up at the same time, the person has to consider which one to fulfill. The more urgent one. And this is usually the commandments between man and his fellow man. D. Hacohen (ibid, pp. 74-75) writes: "The rule of the scriptures equating woman to man for all the commandments in the Torah should also fall on the exemption from the commandments. The exemption of the woman from 'Thou shall' commandment … in my humble opinion, is, in value, equal to the exemption of the man, except that the man is exempt sometimes and the woman is permanently exempt".

[19] F. Heiman (1997) points out that the varied division of the roles between the sexes in the 19th century granted women authorities concerning charity activities of a religious nature as well as the religious education of the children. Even though traditional Judaism recognizes the spirituality of women…the more that life in the modern western world distanced Jewish men from traditional Jewish life style and caused a decrease in religious life… the more the women filled the expectations of society and turned into the guards of the walls of religion for future generations. And she adds: "Jewish women in the West…received a new role … the role of "bequeathers of the tradition" (pp. 122-123).

Lord: Lord in Heaven, everything that you created in the women is put to use: eyes to see, ears to hear, a nose to smell, a mouth to speak, hands to work, feet to walk, breasts to breastfeed. These breasts that you put over my heart – why? Not to use them to breastfeed? Give me a son and I will feed him with them".

There is an opinion among the sages that… "Woman exists only for her children". This perspective is expressed by the sages: "A boy who needs his mother" and also "the little one needs his mother", etc. During the first years of a child's life, the most natural and frequent connection of the child is with the mother. However, it is interesting that legally, the woman is only obligated to do one thing - to nurse her children - and not the other types of childcare involving in raising them. In a natural way, as a result of previous occurrences, it was the women who mostly cared for their children, but this isn't a holy principle[20].

In referring to a similar question about inequality in the division of the tasks in the home (against the claim that 'the woman must spend most of her life doing the 'dirty work'', Rabbi S. Aviner (1988) writes: "It seems to me that most of the man's work is dirtier than that of the woman. At least with her, there is the sweetness of taking care of her home for the people she loves. In any case, nowhere does it say that the man is exempt from taking part in the 'dirty work' in the house and from sharing the burden with his wife".

According to the Jewish sources that were reviewed, it seems that man and woman are perceived as completely equal in "what makes the value of a man: the image of G-d" (ibid, p. 30). In other words, they are equal in their divine spirituality-morality, but they are different in body, in their emotional experience, and in their social functioning. They receive their intensity and their full calling within the framework of the family, and only then their name is: person (ibid, p. 30).

Concerning the leadership of the family, Rabbi Aviner (ibid, p. 38) is drawn to the division accepted in the world of social psychology: there are two kinds of leadership, leadership with a task and social leadership. Every large enterprise needs both like air for breathing. The task leadership is to advance the trends of the enterprise and the social leadership is to 'oil the

---

[20] Martin Buber is mentioned (in: S. Valler, 2001, p. 118) as an intellectual and spiritual leader of the Zionists who called on Jewish women to contribute to the spiritual birth of the Jewish people by fulfilling their traditional role in the family. Details are presented that even though the *Halacha* espoused equality between the sexes … they referred to separate areas of activity out of the assumption that the gender division originates in nature itself … the woman's historical role is to preserve the Jewish family.

wheels of the social relations', so that the enterprise will indeed be able to carry out everything it is supposed to. These two leaders are equally important[21].

The spiritual direction of the home is not determined by the father alone, except for study. But the Torah is not only study, it is also life. The Torah should not be squeezed into the learning aspect of it, and especially not into the Yeshiva male learning aspect. The study of Torah is not the dealing with the details of the Torah alone in the comparative analytic aspect, but rather the connection to the generality of the Torah, which is more tailored for the soul of Jewish women. In any event, the talent to be able to translate the learning to concepts of life, to come down from the lofty heights of abstract ideologies to the beds of practical reality, this is the job of the woman. Both facts are necessary and essential and draw strength from each other.

The status of women in the religious world at the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century: it is impossible to contain this issue fully without looking at the forces acting in society in the 20th century that radiate on the change in women's status both in society and in Jewish thought. First of all, the rise in the value of equality in general should be mentioned. Y. Achituv (1991, p. 60) sees in human equality "that it is a basic value that developed and took on form in the world of modern Western culture, and also radiates on the religious world. The religious world conducts a dialogue with outside culture and absorbs what is appropriate for its inner experience. The attitude to the status of women has become one of the most discussed subjects in the contemporary religious world. It is no wonder that sensitivity on this level and at this scope did not arise hundreds of years ago, and today it is seen as justified on the basis of the requirements of 'natural morality' and is practically intuitively self-evident. As he said: "it can be assumed that the level of sensitivity of sections of our public to the status of women – concerning her function in society, in religion, in the legal system, etc. – was influenced by the level of sensitivity to the status of the woman prevalent in contemporary Western society".

To this perception of equality concerning women there is a special angle – 'feminism'. The feminist movement struggled and is struggling to strengthen social equality between women and men. This movement removed one form and took on many different forms during its

---

[21] Similar thoughts were expressed by D. Shalit (1998, p. 84): In our times, they both learn, they both connect to a reality higher than themselves, they also both work, *i.e.*, they connect to a lower reality, but the area of responsibility is different. The man is the one who is responsible … he is the one who is commanded on the connection with the world beyond the man – while the woman is commanded in the area of application, and her nucleus is the family. In this way, they are "the two great lights" that "if they earned it – the divine spirit would be found between them".

existence. In its old form, it struggled for economic, political, job, and educational equality. Formal equality in these areas was reached in most modern societies but it didn't close the gap in reality. Against this background, a new feminist perspective arose that no longer tried to prove that women's skills are equal to men's skills, but rather demands to give validation to a greater expanse of values and skills in social and economic indices in such a way that even skills thought to be feminine can earn points on the social, economic and cultural ladder. The feminist ideas had repercussions on the value of the family. The thought that discrimination against women is connected at its hub to her place in the family led to a feminine protest against the traditional views in this area. Attempts were made to create alternative models for the family or to re-organize the family structure[22].

These new ideas that stirred up and changed the face of the Western world and modern societies, and put women in new places in society, challenged religious thinking and brought about a renewed discussion on its social structure. The traditional place of the woman in the home and its influence on society and public life as well as her isolation from many areas in religious rituals, were re-examined. The feminist movement flooded the public discussion in religious society with these dilemmas and demanded new answers from society and its spiritual leaders[23]. A demand for equality in marital life was created both from a Halachic legal point of view (active partnership of the woman in the act of marriage, preservation of her rights in the act of divorce – prevention of her being left an *Agunah* ("chained" woman) on the basis of the husband's refusal to grant her a divorce, equal division of property, etc.) Many issues were raised that will enable women to broaden the horizon of their partnership in religious acts even in those areas that were considered the domain of men alone throughout many generations (the reading of the Torah and the Scroll of Esther, dancing with the Torah on the Holiday of the Rejoicing of the Torah, the *Bar Mitzvah* ceremony and party, sanctification of the wine on the Sabbath, blessing the bread before the Sabbath meal, etc.) and mainly broadening the possibility for women to learn Torah without limitation put on Torah subjects and level of study[24].

These claims were accompanied by ideology that attempted to explain the demand for change in traditional society. The religious tradition that is - according to its believers – based on the

---

[22] The Hebrew Encyclopedia, Value: Feminism, Supplement issue B, pp. 949-951.

[23] See, for example: D. Schwartz (2006) and T. Ross (2003, pp. 447-455).

[24] Sharper voices have been heard, such as the call to change some of the words in the blessings and prayers, out of the perspective that these expressions were determined by the male hegemony that dominated in determining the wording of the prayers. Examples of the problematic nature in the prayers: "Blessed…. for not making me a woman" and "Blessed … for making me according to His will": (Y. Tavori, 2001, 107-138; S. Riskin, 2001, pp. 139-149; G. Zevan, 1998, pp. 7-25).

revelation of divine will – is not open to change. For this, the religious feminist ideology needed the virtuosic idea of renewed or continuous revelation of the divine will. The fact that the demand for more involvement of women in religious life is perceived as a moral demand, teaches that even the divine will is in favor of this change according to the generation [25].

These demands brought about opposition and support, resulting in unrest and change in the patterns of the integration of women in the fabric of religious life within religious society in all the sectors of Orthodox society. Some of the discussions and testimony of change appear below.

The religious world, standing against the new tides, offered a variety of reactions to the rise of feminism and the demand for women's equality. There were those who accepted the criticism almost in its entirety [26], and there were those who rejected it with the claim of the superiority of traditional values and their purity. For example, Rabbi M. Meizelman (1978) said: "Do not be impressed by the emotions expressed by women nowadays. What is necessary is to understand the Torah's inner logic [27], and then you can see that it explains and justifies itself … in the Torah, the woman does not serve the man, rather both of them serve the Creator, each one in his own area.

There are also average approaches that attempt to differentiate and filter. Some attempted to differentiate between different generations. Amnon Shapiro (1984, p. 9) quotes Rabbi Malka – the Chief Rabbi of Petah Tikva. In his book 'Ritual Bath', the rabbi says: "The area in which Ben Azai and Rabbi Eliezer [28] differed was in their time, when the king's daughter never went outside of the home. It is not so in our times, when women take a large part in life styles". D. Hacohen (1991, p. 76) asks: "In our times, the women's burden of taking care of

---

[25] T. Ross (1998, pp. 463-464).

[26] Concerning man and wife – the difference: Some claim (Shalit, 1998, p. 12; Rabbi Shaul Berman, 1973; Rabbi Eliezer Berkowitz, 1990) that there is a problem with the status of women in Judaism.
H. Kehat, Chairman of 'Your Voice' (2001, p. 13): The patriarchal environment did not detect the inner voice of the woman … women were not perceived as people existing in their own right. M. Shilo agreed (2006).
A. Lahovsky (1998) claims that one of the problematic areas is the *Halacha*'s attitude toward women. Some of the people in Jewish law were connected to women's organizations in the Land of Israel and were active in the struggle of Jewish women for legal equality. (For example: Paltiel Dickstein, who helped the Union of Hebrew Women for Equal Rights, and even published a book about the rights of women (in: P. Daiken, 1950). In his opinion, because of that, the members of the movement invested great effort in the attempt to prove the equalistic attitude of Jewish law in the conservative stands of the Rabbinical courts in the Land of Israel. They criticized these courts for refusing to adapt Jewish family laws to the modern era, an era of sexual equality. Despite this, when Jewish law was compared to the methods of other courts, the enlightened attitude of Judaism towards women was emphasized.

[27] Rabbi Broyer (1982) also claims that there is no problem with the status of women in the Torah, but rather a problem with the understanding of the Torah.

[28] In referring to the question if a woman is permitted to learn Torah.

the house has been lightened because of high quality of life, technological tools and because the foundation of the value equality opens to her the ability to integrate as she wants and as she chooses. Can she also be a more active partner in fulfilling the commandments she has not been required to fill?[29]"

Rabbi Y. Berkowitz (2002) suggests a distinction between the intention of the Torah itself and the cultural conventions that survived in every generation. What emerges from this is that the Torah leads the reality in a dynamic way to the desired objective since, according to the feeling of the believer, it cannot handle the contradiction of the basic concepts of human justice and morality … and it is the problem of the rabbis to adapt to the new times[30].

The lofty ideology of this perspective is expressed in the idea of the constant revelation (S. Rosenberg, 2003). T. Ross (1998, Footnote no. 30) mentions a Rabbi Kook who sees the social, economic, spiritual, and emotional development as a rare religious right for re-discovery of the divine will. In his opinion, all of these things did not come about coincidentally, and "everything is an act of G-d, and the means, many or few, for hundreds of thousands, are all the work of G-d, who did not leave anything out of His world … there is no incident or opportunity that is not completely directed (Igrot Re'eya, 1).

Beyond the basic discussion, certainly within the religious society changes are taking place that bring it in line in certain areas with the norm in general society: D. Shalit (1998, p. 14) claims that meanwhile it looks like the world of Torah is adopting certain innovations without admitting it: the life of an observant couple today is, in reality, much closer to equality than were their parents and grandparents. And if we take an extreme example, not only does a woman not wash her husband's hands and feet or make his bed … (as written in ***Ketovot***, 5, 5) and also in Maimonides (***Hilchot Ishot***, 21, 3) – but many times he takes care of the children,

---

[29] In this context, the idea of change in natures was mentioned: (R. Levmor, 2001, p. 178), where it was mentioned that Rabbi Neria N. Gotel (1995), in his book "The changing of natures in *Halacha*" brings proof from the Halachic literature (different kinds of responsas, for example the *Hatam Sofer* Responsa, Chairman S. Kaia. ibid, p. 94) who explained that "nature might change by a change in foods, places, times and years of man". Rabbi Gotel brings an example that a change in the nature of man brings about a change in *Halacha*. This raises the question: Is it not possible in part of the Halachic perspectives concerning the status of the woman to see them as a possibility that natures will change?

[30] On the problem of general adjustment in relation to the role of women and their place in the family, see the analysis of F. Heyman (1997). The area of the center/expanse of a woman's activities to the home prevented them opportunities to participate in economic and political life ... they did not integrate into work places on the outside and their social lives were reduced to the home-related area and membership in charity organizations of a religious nature.

Heyman (ibid), bases this on the analysis of Marian Kaplan in her articles: "Priestess and housewife", "Tradition and change". She writes that even though the 20th century brought a perspective of new opportunities for employment and education for women, the division between the sexes and the expectations of proper behavior in women that developed in the 19th century, continued to exist and only gradually fell away.

cooks, etc. so that she can go out to school, etc. (and Maimonides already wrote at the head of all these laws (ibid, 21, 1) "And what does she do for him- everything as per the custom of the country" and the custom of the country today is equalistic …

The place of women in religious life is one of the most talked about subjects today: how much they can integrate into the world of prayer, the reading of the Torah, the summoning to the Torah, etc. An independent solution of the public to these questions, without the cooperation of the world of Halacha, might cause a tear and an undermining of the relationship with the Halachic decision-makers (B. Lau, 2003, p. 31). Attempts to find solutions without significant Halachic backing – point to reform and undermining of the Halacha. True, Halachic accompaniment involves processes, slows the pace of progress, and causes a feeling of frustration, but without a doubt, it is the best road to take.

<div align="center">***</div>

The rise in the value of equality in Western culture also radiates to traditional society. Religious-kibbutz society, which, in its essence, conducts a dialogue with culture outside the kibbutz, was more influenced. The changes in the Western world challenged religious thinking and influenced its social structure. In the wake of that, the horizon of women's partnership broadened in the religious area as well. Tradition is changeable. Even more, change is one of its more authentic descriptions – in this manner it succeeds to exist in the succession of the generations. Radical voices in the religious – feminist movement play an important role in bringing about change. However, any change to tradition will almost always be moderate, gradual and based on an understanding of the Halacha and cooperation with its adjudicators.

The Authority of the sages

The question of authority – The authority of some people to teach others acts or ideas in such a way that the teaching will be binding – is one of the most important issues in explaining "what goes on behind the scenes" in the views of the girls of the religious kibbutz, as will be investigated in this study. Authority in a modern/democratic/free and non-patriarchal society is a concept that even in the religious community – that, by nature, tends to accept authority (at least the yoke of the "Kingdom of Heaven") - is both difficult and complex.

It is impossible to ignore the change taking place in the religious kibbutz movement on the dilemma of the place of the Halachic adjudicator in the kibbutz communities. Today, an orthodox rabbi presides in each of the religious kibbutzim (a total of 16). One of his central tasks is to make Halachic rulings for the members of the community. About 25 years ago, rabbis served in only half of the kibbutzim. This change testifies to the strengthening of the place of Halacha among kibbutz members, or perhaps to a change in Halachic thinking among the young rabbis chosen to preside in the religious kibbutz communities.

A. Halacha

In the broad sense, all the laws of the Torah are called Halacha, and they include all the oral parts of the Torah. The word comes from the root "to go" and implies something that comes and goes from beginning to end, i.e., something that is accepted among the people of Israel and has gone with them from Sinai until today (The Talmudic Encyclopedia, Book 9, 241). The Halacha is the factor that shaped the life of the Jewish people more than anything else (A. Aurbach, 1984, p. 7) and is the normative foundation of Jewish life (Y. Blidstein, 2003, p. 21). It has sweeping authority in the life of the historical Jewish people. It is the tradition by which the people acted from generation to generation and it represented the way of life accepted by so many (A. Aurbach, 1984, p. 8). Its authority is spread over all areas of life and over all Jews, without discriminating between a simple man and a man of religion. The fact that determination of norms for Jewish life is under the jurisdiction of the Halacha and not political leadership, is built in the perspective that the Torah was given to man and not created by him (Y. Blidstein, 2003, p. 22). The researchers are divided on the question: is the source of its authority institutional or part of Jewish consciousness, because the Halacha reflects a life style that promises an affinity for G-d and the correct way to serve him (Y. Blidstein, 2003, pp. 24-25).

The Halacha appears throughout the generations through its experts – the sages. The sages of Israel were given absolute authority to teach the way of G-d and the laws of the Torah: "According to the Torah that they will teach you and the law that they will tell you, do not turn away to the right or left from what they have taught you."(**Deuteronomy**, 17, 11). This authority, which includes the obligation of the public to obey the rulings of the sages and not oppose them, stands at the basis of Halacha for all times (Maimonides, *Hilchot Mamrim*, Ch. 1, Laws 1-2). The reason for this absolute authority is given either in the need to prevent disagreements and to carry out monistic Halacha (ibid., Law 4; Criterion 2 in Bar-Lev, 1993[31]), in the greatness of the sages and the divine assistance granted them when making legal rulings (Rabbi Yehuda Halevy, **Cuzari**, 3 [rd] article, Verse 41), or from their expertise on the subject under discussion (D. Shalit, 1998b, p. 86; M. Bar-Lev, 1993, Criterion 4 – see previous footnote; S. Aviner, 1983, p. 30).

The identity of the sages, their status, and the nature of their affinity to Halacha

Who are the sages to whom the obligation to be obedient is directed? From the words of the verse, and also from the Maimonides mentioned above, it seems that the obligation of obedience to Halachic rulings only exists in relation to the High Court of Jerusalem (or at least a High Court even if not in Jerusalem) [32]. However, there are those who expanded this obligation to include the sages of all times – either because that was how they interpreted the obligation of the Torah (Maimonides, **The Book of Education**, Commandment 291), or because in every generation there is a need for a decision that is binding to everyone (because if not, the Torah will become like two Torahs) (Rabbi Nissim, **Derashot HaRan**, Sign 12). Even if there is no obligation to obey, it is still understood in itself as an axiom (D. Shalit, 1998b, p. 80; A. Goldman, 1995; Y. Karlitz, 1986; A. Dessler, 1974).

The authority of the Halacha is, therefore, the authority of sages or perhaps there is a gap between the two concepts?

Some see the Halacha as the word of G-d: "The word of G-d is the Halacha" (**Shabbat**, 138, p. 2) and from this the support to see the Halacha as being the word of G-d (D. Shalit, 1998b, p. 85). Halachic action exposes and reveals the word of G-d Himself and does not add any

---

[31] M. Bar-Lev (1993) mentioned 5 bases for the legitimacy of authority: 1. tradition. 2. laws or regulations. 3. charisma. 4. professionalism. 5. source of authority stemming from personal relationships.

[32] High Court – A court of seventy men representing the highest religious authority, handed down from generation to generation, going back to Moses. Such an authority has not existed in the nation of Israel for many hundreds of years (Y. Ariel, 1991).

independent human dimension to Halachic truth (A. Sagie, 2003, pp. 221-222) [33], and in any event, there is no connection between it and the sage's point of view (B. Lau, 2003, p. 21).

In contrast, there are those who see (A. Rosenthal, 1971) mainly the Halachic perspective that "everything depends on opinion", *i.e.*, "Good manners precedes Torah" – which is the initial view with which the rabbi arrives for clarification of the Halacha. The world inhabited by the arbiter can dictate the relative weight to assign factors such as 'time of stress', 'domestic harmony', and 'changing times'. The meta-Halachic world is what dictates the relative Halachic weight given to matters of value or faith (Y. Ahituv, 1991) [34]. There were even some who went so far as to see the basis for freedom of creation and Halachic-ruling as stemming from the detachment between commitment to the original intention of the word of G-d and the opinion of the sage and the commentator (A. Sagie, 1996, p. 12)[35].

B. The areas of authority

There is a dispute between the Babylonian Talmud and the Jerusalem Talmud on the question of the punishment of a rebellious scholar [36]. Does the obligation to obey the High Court also exist in non-Halachic areas, such as *Haggadah*?

According to Rabbi Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook (1973), this dispute is a typical line of argument between the Torah of the Land of Israel and the Torah from abroad. In the Torah of the Land of Israel man and other spiritual matters are considered binding. Like the position of the Jerusalem Talmud, Rabbi Yaakov Ariel (1991, p. 23) reaches the conclusion that in issues of faith, one should obey the scholar, if he really is competent in these profound subjects. Rabbi Yehuda Amichai (1990, p. 28) thinks that the political positions of the Torah sages are not included in the commandment to obey them. He brings support for this from different issues in the Talmud.

On three questions: the identity of the sages, the area of their authority, and the identity between them and the Halacha as the word of G-d, there are those who expand and those who don't. The traditional orientation attempts to expand the identity of the sages beyond the period of the Temple and the High Court and to grant the sages broader authority in the different areas of life. It also attempts to see greater identity between the word of G-d and the teachings of the sage. In contrast, the new and liberal approach generally attempts to reduce

---

[33] And see on p. 223 that this model was dominant among researchers throughout the generations.
[34] As written by the author: This was said by A. Goldman (1995).
[35] See the description of Y. Gilat (1978) of the building of the culture of conversation in the Study Hall during the time of the *Tannas*.
[36] A wise man who refuses to obey the highest authority of the High Court.

authority in both the historical area and in the areas in which authority exists, and from an ideological point of view, it tends to see a gap between the word of G-d and the Torah of man.

However, these perceptions do not necessarily pass the realistic philosophical test, since the big question in this dilemma on the authority of the Halacha and the sages is the issue of change – the change of Halachic leadership in light of changes throughout the generations.

Is the change possible? What justifies it? What stand will the conservative and liberal factions take on this issue?

C. Change in Halacha

Review of the development of the Halacha throughout the generations unequivocally indicates changes in the area of Halacha (D. Shalit, 1998b, p. 86) [37]. On the surface, it seems that Halacha adapts and adjusts to changing reality from both a realistic (the natural sciences) and cultural/value point of view [38]. This fact – which serves those with a liberal approach who want change here and now – presents a challenge to those with a conservative approach, who view the Halacha as the eternal word of G-d (S. Wezner, 2003, p. 83).

Orthodoxy is developing an approach that maintains that change itself is not arbitrary but rather an organic part in a divine process whose purpose is correction and upgrading. According to this perspective, the changing, the movement, the flow in Halacha reflect loyalty to stability and eternality – and only this makes them legitimate. In such a way, historical processes are not foreign to the Torah: history and the Torah, land and sky – were created as one (D. Shalit, 1998b, p. 99), however, the legitimacy for change demands filtering that slows down the process but also purifies it and places it in traditional sequence (T. Ross, 2003, pp. 389-390; E. Shochtman, 1993, pp. 72-89). In fact, the approach of Halacha in the conservative ultra-religious world that identifies the intuitions of the arbiter as dominant from the point of view of Halachic ruling and, by that, allows him a large amount of room to maneuver – could have been the basis for change in the world of Halacha, but this possibility was not taken advantage of (T. Ross, 2003, pp. 292-293). S. Rosenberg (2003, pp. 70-71) explains this phenomenon in greater detail.

---

[37] And see how T. Ross explains (2003, pp. 391-392) that even a stand that maintains the view that change is forbidden is an opinion in itself, and expresses change and represents an innovation and change.
[38] Ancient scholars such as Maimonides (at the beginning of "Guide for the Perplexed") and Rabbi Yehuda Halevy (**Kuzari**, 1 st article, sections 67, 89) knew that there was no possibility of a contradiction between intelligence and the Torah, instead of contradictions, commentary should be found that is not contradictory, not in disputes between morality and justice and between the most simple laws (D. Shalit, 1998, p. 13).

New openings for changes in Halacha can be found in the way that Rabbi H.D. Halevy made rulings, including determining that bringing precedents with explanations was not sufficient, but rather new ways of ruling should be created (H.D. Halevy, 1987, pp. 229-238) [39]. A similar idea was expressed in the theoretical article of Rabbi Y. Serlo (2003), who aimed at the union of practical teaching and moral foundation.

D. The stand of members of the religious kibbutz on the dilemma of authority of the Halachic and its sages

Members of the religious kibbutz have a unique approach to this dilemma. There are those who think (M. Or, 1987, pp. 130-131) that rabbinical authority should only discuss religious and not public questions. On these questions, the public and the individual must make independent decisions. S. Friedman (1975) also leans toward this view. He thinks that in areas that are not characteristically Halachic, it is desirable to listen the opinion of the rabbis "… but not to accept what they say as binding". He bases his opinion on several sources that express reservations about the need to accept the word of the sages in the *Aggadah*. Friedman (ibid), like others (M. Onah, 1985, p. 34; Y. Aviner, 1983, p. 27) is aware of the difficulty of separating the divine word from the commonplace word. Some (Y. Ahituv, 1991, pp. 60-63; Tz. Admonit, 1962) challenge this dichotomy, this challenge stemming from the basic approach of the religious kibbutz, which sees the Torah as a living Torah not restricted to the synagogue or study hall. Admonit (1962) claims that it is difficult to maintain the separation of areas between 'pure' Halacha, with which the authority is given to the rabbinate, and social and political laws, with which there is unwillingness to accept its authority. "And the laws of a nation, war, and more, are not laws? … Is the separation between Sabbath/dietary laws and social and political issues really possible?"

Ultimately, he finds a formal way outside the Halacha and does not accept the ruling of the rabbis and the rabbinate. He is not prepared to give up his views for the decisions of the Chief Rabbinate and does not choose to interpret them according to their simple meaning[40].

Among the new rabbis (B. Lau, 2003, p. 31), some were found to fear the dichotomy emerging from these approaches. The issues now under debate in modern religious society are varied but focus mainly on the relationship between the individual's status and the Halachic

---

[39] See Y. Stern's (2002, p. 451) analysis of this phenomenon.

[40] He interprets in a 'sermonizing' way the rabbinical decision about the drafting of women into the Israel Defense Forces, and Tzuriel Admonit (ibid) adds that in the rabbinic declaration there is an element of agreement out of silence about the drafting of women. He also maintains, in light of past precedents, that rabbinical decisions were not always accepted by the public and therefore, the religious kibbutz should also maintain the uniqueness of its opinions and not compromise.

authority. An independent solution by the public, without the cooperation of the Halachic world, will bring to an internal tear in the community and will undermine the relationships with Halachic decision-makers.

"The scent that rises from practical solutions that are not backed up by significant Halachic opinions is the scent of reform and the undermining of Halacha" (B. Lau, ibid, p. 34). On the other hand, according to Y. Serlo (2005), the concern is raised that lack of the ability of the Torah study hall to listen to the changing needs of life will lead to the public distancing itself from the path of Torah as taught by the great sages. Therefore, these sages must be alert and prepared for changes in line with Jewish tradition throughout the generations.

H. The aspect of education in the dilemma of the authority of sages in the religious kibbutz

The pluralistic approach popular in the kibbutz, along with the ambivalence of accepting the yoke of the Halacha, makes the existence of spiritual leadership more difficult. Already in 1947, this lacking emerged (M. Buleh, 1947, pp. 12-14) and was explained in the religious/spiritual authority in the kibbutzim. Some claimed that even the bringing of a rabbi into a kibbutz is not enough but there is a need for a permanent institution that can give the religion legal status in the kibbutz. Twenty years later, the need for rabbinical authority on the kibbutz was again raised (Kahane, 1969), based on the commandment in the Torah 'Thou shalt not turn away'. This commandment is of great importance, since "He who disdains it is not only kicking the sages of his own generation, he is kicking the entire practical application of the written Torah from all times". In his analysis of the situation in the religious kibbutz, he reaches the conclusion that he must "adopt a rabbinical personality whose light will always guide him and he will accept the rulings if he agrees with it or not". In contrast, another member (A. Shapiro, 1975, pp. 49-50) differentiates between the fundamental aspect of the critical approach popular on the religious kibbutz, as expressed by S. Friedman (1975) – the approach that does not tend to fully accept the authority of the sages – and the educational approach that warns of the serious damage resulting from this refusal. In his opinion, the younger generation sees this as a religious weakness with repercussions on choosing of a path and that distances him from Jewish tradition. Concerning this severe difficulty, he concludes with a question: "Isn't it better if we give up our intellectual rights … in order to achieve more religious and educational identity for ourselves and our students?..." About a decade later, A. Shemesh (1981, pp. 16-17) discusses, from similar angles, the phenomenon of

secularization in the religious kibbutz, and a decade later, following expansion of the phenomenon of secularization, A. Shapiro (1991) renews his claims mentioned above.

The questions that emerged did not bring about an ideological revolution in the religious kibbutz[41], but certain changes did take place during the last 15 years. The educational programs in the kibbutz became more diverse – and a respectable number of boys and girls now learn in religious high schools. As said[42], rabbis were appointed in kibbutzim where there had previously been no rabbi, and the status of the rabbinate in the kibbutz became permanent. However, the success of the rabbis in their activities in the kibbutz depends on their ability to be partners to the kibbutz ideology and mores, and to change and be changed along with it[43].

<div align="center">***</div>

The acceptance of authority – even if it is religious – is problematic by the nature of a modern and democratic society such as the kibbutz. The Halacha is the normative basis of religious life, and the authority of the sages stands at the foundation of Halacha for all times. The desire to prevent a split between modern societies and the authority of Halacha and its adjudicators, demands sensitivity and understanding on the part of the adjudicators to changing life conditions, as well as willingness for some kind of restraint and discipline on the part of the modern religious communities, such as the religious

---

[41] See Y. Ahituv (1991), who claims that "There is no exclusive uniform religious cultural formula in the religious kibbutz. There is a certain degree of pluralism within the religious kibbutz not only on political questions, but also in the religious outlook and everything derived from them".

[42] See above at the beginning of the chapter.

[43] This resembles the model of A.S. Rosenthal (in: B. Lau, 2003, p. 21) who recommends a model of Torah scholars saturated in the world of Torah and education. These rabbis will allow the creation of communities searching for a model resembling that of Torah authority.

The Methodology

A. Phenomenology

 The term phenomenology originated from the philosophers who developed many of the insights on the question on the awareness of man. Creswell (1998) noted that phenomenology and anthropology are strategic researches that make use of theory before asking questions and collecting data.

Phenomenologists make a-priori decisions that provide guidelines for the research. In their research, they look through a powerful cultural lens. Denzin and Lincoln (2000, p. 3) suggested a comprehensive definition stating: "Qualitative research is a situational activity that offers an observation point to someone who is looking at the world … you investigate things in their natural place and try to find meaning or to explain the phenomena in terms used by people".

According to Willis (1991), in phenomenology, one looks for the 'essence' of the human experience or its central and fundamental meaning. Gall et al. (1996) pointed out that phenomenologists study the structure of awareness in a human experience (by dealing with understanding the meaning of events to the people participating in them). Creswell (1998) termed the object of the study a 'phenomenon'.

Denzin and Lincoln (2000, p. 3) formulated a comprehensive definition offering a common denominator to the various approaches in qualitative research: the research "… is a situational activity that allows the researcher to position himself in relation to the world under investigation. The research contains interpretative activities that turn the world … into a series of representatives made up of field comments, interviews, discussions, pictures. Qualitative research investigates things in their natural context, and tries to derive meaning or interpret phenomena using terms that people themselves use". In 2003, Creswell wrote that qualitative research is a broad objective covering different research approaches that promote insights. Alpert (2005) and Sabar Ben-Yehoshua (2001) agreed with this.

Qualitative research is nourished by anthropologic methodology (which means the understanding of human behavior as it occurs in real-authentic situations), According to Giorgi (1995, p. 35), the phenomenon under investigation and the focus of the research are "things as they are perceived".

Anthropology is a term that represents both a process and a product. The final product is a cultural-holistic portrait of a social group and contains the opinions of the group and the interpretations of the researcher on the above (Creswell, 1998). Anthropology had a great influence on qualitative research in the field of education (Alpert, 2005). The main part methodology is interpretation and collection of data, and documents that testify to a certain situation while bridging between the objective and subjective approaches (Shavit, 1981).

Qualitative study is characterized by its holistic relationship to phenomena (Stake, 1995, p. 45) and, therefore, qualitative methodologies will be used when the aim is to understand phenomena and situations as whole entities (Lincoln and Guba, 2000; Henwood, 1996).

Sabar Ben-Yehoshua (1999, p. 19) claimed that the use of qualitative research to understand processes and situations indicates the researcher's search for the whole and not the partial or incomplete, preferring the natural state over one controlled by external intervening factors. "In this kind of research, the aim is to understand phenomena rather than just explain them by formulating rules and generalizations". Understanding has a different significance that that of explanation and is characterized by sympathy. Understanding is a re-creation in the researcher's mind (Kuzminesky, 2005, p. 16; Shkedi, 2003, p. 115) of the atmosphere, mentality, thoughts, feelings, and motivations of the research objects (Brunner, 1996; Kvale, 2002; Grimmett and MacKinnon, 1992). Some relate to the topic (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995; Shkedi, 2003, pp. 58-59) and claim that the explanation belongs to the field of overt knowledge, as seen in objects, phenomena, and events, while understanding belongs to the area of covert knowledge that allows us to understand images and situations, and that in the wake of this understanding, it is possible to have better knowledge of the research field and its objects.

The objectives of the anthropological researcher is to share with those under investigation the significances of the culture of their lives, which are perceived as being taken for granted, and after that, to put into words new meanings "through the act of reflection" (Giorgi, 1995, p 35), as Brunner (1996) said: The 'reality' that we assign to the worlds we live in is created through structuring". This idea is in line with Lincoln and Denzin (2000) who said that the qualitative researcher attempts to approach, understand, and interpret what man says and the phenomena that he studies, and does not necessarily aspire to absolute universal truths.

In 1973, Cusiek recommended that in order to ensure the success of the research, the overt approach should be taken. This approach clarifies the research objective to those under

investigation in order to gain greater cooperation from them. This recommendation was adopted in this work.

The holistic analysis (Shkedi, 2003, p. 68) that characterizes this type of study includes in its analysis different variables without the need for manipulation. The data are generally collected by observations and personal interviews and the writing style is rich, descriptive (Patton, 1980, p. 22), and informal, including verbal quotes, illustrations, and even metaphors (Charmaz, 1995, p. 30). This idea is in line with Denzin (1995, p. 44), who said that in this manner, the writings remain "close to the actual experiences of the people under investigation" and the group or phenomenon is presented in an intimate way (Merriam, 1985), along with picking up nonverbal behavior such as silences, expressions of embarrassment, etc. (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000; Jorgensen, 1989).

Qualitative research is a general name for different research features that can be summarized as having five main characteristics (Sabar Ben-Yehoshua, 1999, pp. 21-25):

A. Qualitative research draws data from the natural network (the research location) and the researcher is the main research tool.

B. Qualitative research is descriptive and, therefore, the reports and articles written in this method are narrative.

C. In this type of research, there is more interest in processes than in results and products. Understanding the process is the key to understanding what is happening.

D. The researchers tend to analyze their data inductively. Hypotheses preceding the research are not used. Perception develops as data are accumulated.

E. Great importance is given to the significance of things as seen by those under investigation. In order to understand the phenomena as seen by those under investigation, different means are used. Lincoln (2002, p. 328) also presented a list of characteristics but added that this list is "open and developing", i.e., it is not binding and things can be added or deleted – according to the needs of the research.

Sabar Ben-Yehoshua (1999, p. 50) attributes three different content components to the structure of qualitative research: the factual component, the interpretative component, and the judgment/value component. The relation between these components differs from study to study as per the objective and nature of the study.

B. The qualitative research process

The qualitative research process, as described by Spradely (1980) and Widdershoven (1993, p. 5), is characterized by cycles. During the course of the study, it is possible to formulate clear problems that return the researcher back to earlier stages, to pondering and the additional collection of data from the field (Pidgeon, 1996, p. 77). This is a flexible research and is not carried out in only one direction (Shkedi, 2003, p. 53).

The circular sequence begins with the choosing of a research topic, and from there the researcher moves to field work, being in possession of general theory and knowledge as well as unformulated questions. While collecting data, he can identify preliminary questions that - during the course of the study - the degree of their particulars will become clearer, and it will then be possible to categorize and define them. The link between the research questions and the theoretical literature will help, but it is more dynamic and less linear than in quantitative research (Arksey and Knight, 1999).

The beginning of qualitative research is in the perception of the events and the interactions. There must be things that "will guide the observations and thinking in a satisfactory manner but not too much" (Stake, 1995, p. 15). Reality or a certain behavior is formulated after the asking of preliminary research questions, so that during the course of the study, a hypothesis is raised that brings to the formulation of a research question out of an attempt to define patterns and processes (Widdershoven, 1993, p. 5; Lieblich et al., 1998, p. 10; Charmaz, 1995, p. 32).

The circular sequence of the research is expressed by the fact that the analysis of the data is seasonal (Shkedi 2003 p. 53) and is done after every stage of the study, while questions are asked through a process of reflection (Van Manen, 1995). "In this way, a continuous mutual game is created between suggestion and examination" (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, p. 111). Renewed organization of a different analytical arrangement of the information takes place (Araujo, 1995) and Jorgensen (1989) asks for openness for the widest range possible and the possibility that the preliminary ideas will not be suitable or will be completely erroneous. The last stage is the writing stage. This stage might also lead to the need for new questions and the preparation of additional observations (Pidgeon and Henwood, 1996).

Ethnographic/narrative writing requires the researcher to perform a renewed and intensive analysis that opens the way for continuation of the cycle of the research (Mason, 1996, p. 16), while increasing the awareness and clarifying the understanding of known and familiar phenomena and experiences (Creswell, 1998).

Data collection for the purpose of the research was carried out in two main stages:

1. Integration into the daily reality of the framework under investigation for over 20 years as an "employee" on the kibbutz, who observes, listens, is involved, and acts as a part of the kibbutz in general. This stage was characterized by maximum openness to receive an abundance of different and diverse kinds of information.

2. Focusing on subjects that have taken shape for the purpose of the research using deeper methods of collection of material and knowledge by studying the regulations, protocols, and various notes that represent the stages of the study.   The sequence of qualitative research is described schematically by Sabar Ben-Yehoshua (1999, p. 44).
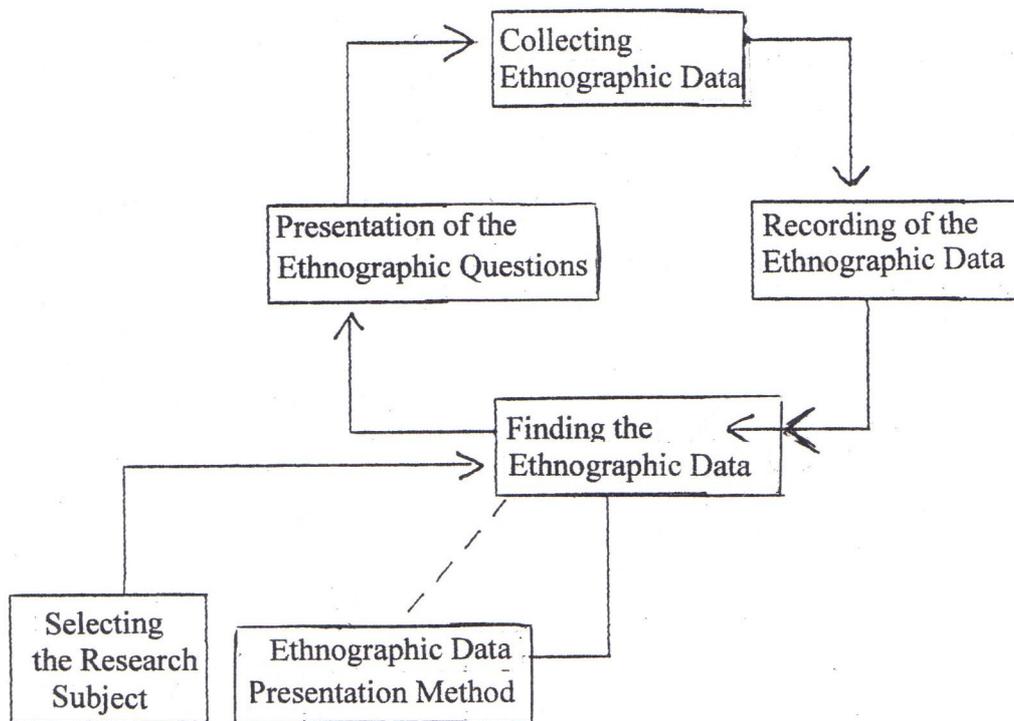
Qualitative research is a method for organizing information and social data in a way that preserves the exclusive nature of the objects under investigation. According to Stake (1995, p. 8), what the researcher is really occupied with is "not how it differs from others, but what are its meanings and what are its characteristics" – each one is a unique 'case'. Patton (1980, p. 22) pointed out that the qualitative researcher "tries to grasp what people have to say in their own words". Patton (1980, p. 43) and Charmaz (1995, p. 30) claimed that one learns about a culture by observating, listening, and drawing conclusions from the field work.

Sabar Ben-Yehoshua (1999, p. 116) quoted Kenny and Grotkluschen (1984): "… numerous meanings in observations and reporting are a tolerable phenomenon, and there is a demand for presentation of numerous viewpoints and comprehensive description that is alive and rich in

details. Humanism is gladly accepted and is written in a simple language, not in a technical formal language". Stake (1995, p. 8) said that "you learn through the eyes of the people who are experiencing it", i.e., you present the data from a situation without being dependent on hypotheses ("the concept-indicator model").

C. Methodological problems in the qualitative research approach

The use of qualitative research as a research approach presents several research limitations:

1. **Boundaries** – The research question and its scope is not a formal question, but has an influence on the determination of boundaries and the distribution of the data being collected. How does the researcher determine the boundaries of his study? How is it determined what it will include and what is the relevance of the topics?

As with every method, the boundaries of the research are determined from the topic or from the question presented for investigation.

1) Sabar Ben-Yehoshua (1999, p. 42) pointed out a number of ways to determine the boundaries of the research.

a.   Documentation related to the research question – the boundaries will only apply to the areas in which the documentation is valid.

 b.   Determination of the reasons causing the situation under investigation – they too represent demarcation of the boundaries of the research.

c.   The researcher searches for possible solutions to the problem that are limited to and demarcated only in the topic being investigation

d.   In order to define the results, there are two possibilities: existing, true results and anticipated results. The need to determine the expected results positions the boundaries of the study and their suitability to formulate the research question. In addition, Sabar Ben-Yehoshua (1999, p. 43) noted that the nature of the research questions also contributes to the determination of its boundaries since the question of inclusion of data which is the result of encountering problems stemming from value issues, will be determined according to the focus on what is under investigation. According to Schwandt (1996) and Strauss and Corbin (1994), the variables and components of the problems also represent the boundaries of the research. This depends on early personal and professional experience, on prejudices, and on reading descriptive literature in anticipation of the research. Therefore, even though the qualitative

researcher does not determine clear and pre-defined boundaries, he approaches the study with certain knowledge and with objectives anchored in some kind of theory.

2. **Focus** – Lincoln and Guba (1985) noted that the focus of the research in the early stages serves two main purposes: **a.** it bases the conceptual boundaries of the research; **b.** it helps decide where and how to collect data. This issue stems from the analysis and categorization of the information collected.

The issue of focus has two contrasting characteristics: gathering - in order to create categories for processing information, and dissemination - in order to complement the information received from the categorization in order to get a whole picture (Shkedi, 2003, p. 61).

Is it possible to generalize in qualitative diagnosis?

Fireston (1993) as well as Strauss and Corbin (1990, p. 191) claimed that cases cannot be compared. In contrast, Simons (1996) and Stake (1978, pp. 6-7) believe that learning a private case leads to understanding of the universal. Guba and Lincoln (1989) suggested replacing the concept 'generalization' with the concept 'transferability'.

3. **Objectivity and subjectivity** – Qualitative research is a process that emphasizes the need for the understanding or subjective interpretation of the phenomenon under investigation and the question is asked: Does not the subjectivity of the researcher influence his data? Charmaz (2000, p. 524) noted that what the observer sees, shapes what he will define, measure, and analyze. This is also the opinion of Guba and Lincoln (1998) and Sabar Ben-Yehoshua (2001, p. 29). Qualitative research requires the researcher to cope with his opinions concerning the data, and this in addition to the fact that that the researcher's initial objective is to add knowledge and not express an opinion or judge the phenomenon under investigation.

On the other hand (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994, p. 20; Strauss and Corbin, 1990, p. 95), since the numerous data, which are the basis for the findings and their interpretation, it raises the question of subjectivity, which draws criticism about the problematics of the research.

Charmaz (2000, p. 515) suggested early coding into categories as a way "to remain attentive to the opinions of those being investigated about their realities". Denzin and Lincoln (2000) did not see subjectivity as a problem but rather a given that expresses a position of involvement. Woods (1996, p. 51) added that the qualitative researcher is not above the research or outside it, but "the self of the researcher is integrated into the research".

According to Sabar Ben-Yehoshua (1999, p. 29), following the rules, which guarantee the credibility of the research, reduces the problem of subjectivity of the researcher. This is also true for the form of the research discussed here as well as the type of quantitative research.

Examples of means of supervision used by the qualitative researcher to supervise subjectivity: **a)** listing his opinions and impressions as opposed to what he has observed; **b)** crosschecking the important data; and **c)** writing the material with its preliminary/basic interpretations to be judged by external researchers.

4. **Authenticity** – One of the main problems in qualitative research concerning the process of the collection of data and their interpretation, is the need to understand the world of those under investigation in their cultural context since "there is no such thing as 'human nature' that is cut off from its culture" (Geertz, 1973, p. 49).

The problem of authenticity touches on the creation of the influence that the presence of the researcher has on those under investigation (Creswell, 1998, p. 110; Gorgensen, 1989) and especially that during the research period, close relationships are usually woven with those being observed (Shkedi, 2003, p. 29). "The most powerful way to understand people is to look, to listen, and to mix with them in their natural environment". This situation necessitates the researcher to be reflective: to stop and have an internal dialogue (Woods, 1996).

The familiarity of those under investigation with each other also has an influence on the findings. The issue of possible personal interaction and its effect on validity is anchored in following the rules of the research concerning reduction of the influence of the observer (Woods, 1996; Rist, 1982; Patton, 1980). Shkedi (2003, p. 56) adds that it cannot be ignored that the researcher, who also acts as a research tool, learns a lot about the meanings of reality out of his involvement in the reality of the person he is studying.

5. **Reliability of the qualitative research** – Research reliability is among the criteria for good research, as research results must be reliable as per the research tool (Riesman, 1993). It should be remembered that in qualitative research, the researcher is the research tool and, therefore, it is difficult to expect that different researchers will receive identical findings (Merrick, 1999). Along with this, it cannot be ignored that man is a flexible enough tool to absorb the complexities and constant changing of the characteristics of the human experience (Merriam, 1998, p. 7; Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 193).

According to the outlook of qualitative research, research reliability is anchored in compatibility between what is happening at the site and the report of the researcher (Mason,

1996, p. 146; Riesman, 1993, p. 65; Dey, 1993) and, therefore, faithful writing and reporting of the investigation are critically important as they are perceived as a basis for testing the findings (Peshkin, 2000; Arksey and Knight, 1999, p. 58; Mason, 1996, p. 152) rather than for promoting additional analysis (Pidgeon, 1996).

According to Sabar Ben-Yehoshua (2001), despite the difficulties, it is possible to build highly reliable qualitative research. Eylon (2005), who is partly supported by Yosefun (2001) and Alpert (2001), suggested six ways to do this: a. professional data collection; b. use of substantial and convincing descriptions; c. conducting research with multiple cases; d. honesty and self-criticism of the researcher; e. data analysis control (= external judges); and f. crosschecking (by the use of documents – that will back up/refute what emerges in the research, mutual validation, etc.).

D. Data collection tools

In addition to the source of the preliminary information received directly from interviewees and observations, secondary sources of information included reports and protocols. One should differentiate between two types of knowledge: covert knowledge and overt knowledge. The challenge is to change the covert knowledge to declared knowledge, so that it will be possible to return to it and "treat" it openly and transfer it to others (Shkedi, 2003, pp. 58-59, 68).

Below is a description of the three research tools used to collect data: **a**. interview; **b**. observation; **c**. document (Merriam, 1985; Shkedi, 2003, p, 60).

* Interview – In this work, the main part of the research was done through the use of interviews. Each interview is a kind of interaction between a talker and a listener. Fontana and Frey (2000, p. 645) see it as one of the most prevalent and prominent ways to understand human beings. "It is a significant means to help people turn things that were covert for them into something overt – to express their outlooks, thoughts, and covert understandings" (Arksey and Knight, 1999, p. 32). The interviews were conducted with the "makers of policy" of the aspects under investigation as well as with the girls of the religious kibbutz. The interviews with the girls of the religious kibbutz were divided according to age of the kibbutz and age of the girls, and was a long-term study conducted during two different periods (with about 15 years between the two periods). The interviews focused on the research topics as per the research questions, with the wording of the questions not predetermined, thus allowing flexibility for both the interviewee and the interviewer (Seidman, 1991). Through the

interviews, information was received on ways to determine the unique aspects within the religious kibbutz society as well as information on the opinions of the interviewees and their personal attitude towards the topics under investigation.

The interviews began with a few sentences of explanation on the study, the areas of interest of the researcher, the recording and the rewriting. According to Shkedi (2003, p.73) and Fontana and Frey (2000, p. 646), for the opening question, each one was asked to tell about herself and only after that the general questions began to direct the interviewee towards the topic under investigation. In the general questions, there was great need for 'active' listening in order to cause the interviewee to go into more details and expand on the answer (Arksey and Knight, 1999; Seidman, 1991, pp. 56-57).

There are three main styles of interview: A) Open ethnographic interview

B) Structured standard interview

C) Guided and focused interview

For the purpose of this work, different types of interviews were used. The main one was the open ethnographic interview, which is a kind of in-depth interview similar to a friendly conversation (Flick, 1998; Mason, 1996; Seidman, 1991). In this type of interview, two processes which complement each other are combined: the creation of affinity between the researcher and the people under investigation, and the production of information (Fontana and Frey, 2000, p. 652; Gudmundsdottir, 1996). Interviews of this type sometimes involved two people (the researcher and the person under investigation) and sometimes a group was used as a focus group. For the purpose of this work, a focus group [44] was used as a pilot study for the research project itself (Shkedi, 2003, p. 90; Morgan, 1988). The use of the open ethnographic interview also requires the use of questions compatible to this type of interview. A stimulated-recall interview, which uses secondary information (such as observations and documents), was also used for the purpose of expanding the collection of primary information. All this was by means of questions on the topics or events that were mentioned, or those that were not yet mentioned (Jovchelovitch and Bauner, 2000; Shkedi, 2003, p. 69).

In the research, three types of questions were used as per the categorization of Marshal and Rossman (1989, p. 78) based on Spradely (1979). The main types of questions were:

---

[44] In a focus group, the emphasis is on social interaction based on topics usually brought to the discussion by the researcher. In this process, there is a combination of the foundations of a personal interview and the involved or participatory observation and thus it is a source of enrichment for personal interviews (Flick, 1998), therefore, the skills of the interviewer are important (Fontana and Frey, 2000, p. 646). The advantage of such a group is that it gives an opportunity "to observe a large amount of interactions on the topic in a limited period of time" (Morgan, 1988, p. 15; Fontana and Frey, 2000, p. 646).

- Descriptive questions – which allow collecting a sampling of what the speakers say.

- Structuring questions – which allow exposure of information about the way those under investigation prepare regarding their knowledge of the research topics.

- Questions of contrasts and comparisons – which allow distinguishing the unique aspects and events central to the research (Woods, 1996, p. 53).

* Observation – Observation is an important part of research. Although it represents a source of secondary information for the actual period of the research it can serve as a source of preliminary information and background material. The use of observations to collect data in qualitative research is divided into two types of observations:

1. Open observations – including the researcher's impressions of most of the factors making up the environment under investigation.

2. Focused observations – in which there is a description of matters decided in advance.

For the purpose of this work, open observations were first used and at a later stage – when the research subject was determined – there was a transition to focused observations.

Shkedi (2003, p. 80) classified the types of observations on the level of involvement of the researcher into 4 elements in succession, beginning with the non-participating external observer and ending with the participating observer:

---------+-----------------------+----------------------------+--------------------+

Pure participation   Participating observation   Mixed observation[45]   Observation
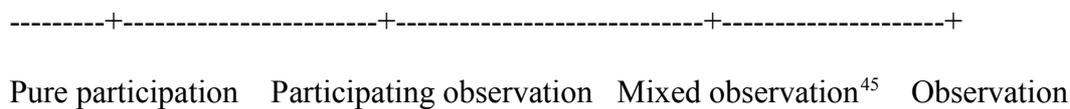
Participating observation – This is a basic strategy to collect ethnographic data in which the world under observation is experienced "from the inside" (Jorgensen, 1989, p. 53). This type of observation usually takes place over a long period of time and demands a high level of participation at the investigated site (Shkedi, 2003, p. 81). In this type of observation, the researcher becomes part of the population under investigation, takes part in the daily activities, and writes them down as soon as possible to the actual time when they took place using the natural speech of the participants (Patton, 1980, p. 22). The writings include comments based on the outlook of the researcher as well as both influences from his role as a researcher and from reactions of the environment towards him. Thus there was an expression

---

[45] Involvement – a high level of involvement of the researcher in the environment under investigation for a long period of time.

Participatory – here too the researcher is involved, but the amount of time dedicated to observation is shorter and more focused.

of "awareness of the conceptual perspective", which is parallel to the term "theoretical sensitivity". The term points out awareness of the subtleties of the meanings of information (Mason, 1996; Strauss and Corbin, 1990, p. 41).

During the stage of open observations in this work, participating observations were used. These made it easier get to know the interviewees well and to compare their reactions in different situations and at different times, to understand conversational codes and points of view that a researcher, who would try to skip this stage (which took me several years) would have a hard time understanding fully and, therefore, have a hard time comparing and contrasting it to other situations and places (Woods, 1996 pp, 39-40; Jorgensen, 1989, p. 53).

According to Strauss and Corbin (1994, p. 280), the notes written in participating observations also included comments based on the outlook of the researcher, influenced by both his role in the field being investigated as well as the reactions of the environment towards him.

To be an involved researcher means "to understand the point of view of those under investigation out of empathy and not only out of sympathy, and the significance of being with the others – is what makes a qualitative researcher unique" (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994, p. 28).

Non-participating observation – In this type of observation, data are collected with limited contact, if any, with the participants. In this observation, those under investigation do not feel any reciprocal relations between themselves and the researcher, and it is a source of secondary information on the culture of the person under investigation in picking up nonverbal field comments (silences, expressions of embarrassment, disquiet, etc.) – that make up an important part of the reservoir of data that will be integrated into the 'analysis' (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000).

The advantage of this observation is its objectivity, which allows documentation of the events without personal turns and diversions (see Strauss and Corbin, 1990, p. 41). According to Nachmiass (1982), this expands the reliability that enables writing down the events as they occur and, in that way, it overcomes the problem of partial reporting by the actual people under investigation.

In this way, the researcher distances himself further from the object (the type of connection he has with it), but get closer to its meaning (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994, pp. 31-32).

These kinds of observations allowed the supply of information on processes of decision-making and introduction of innovations, as they actually occur in the kibbutzim under investigation, and how they are expressed through the various frameworks of kibbutz education, although it is impossible to completely prevent diversions by the researcher (Woods, 1996). In non-participating observations, attempts were made to use objective descriptions. The research objective was presented at the beginning of the research period, and the agreement of the entire team of participants was obtained.

* Analysis of written documents – Decisions, regulations, letters, articles, protocols – all these contribute information to the data received from interviews and observations.

Some tools that help preserve data and prevent its loss: notebooks to write down comments, taping, photocopying and writing memos [46]. These serve the researcher as "tools to enable a broad and continuous dialogue with himself" (Charmaz, 1990, p. 1169).

E. The research process

The choice of the qualitative research approach for this study was determined because of its contribution to the perception of situations and the understanding of phenomena and situations. The aim that guided us was not to settle for a description of the situation but to try to understand it, while attempting to preserve the unique character of each interviewee. As Sabar Ben-Yehoshua (1999, p. 116) said: in a research like this, each interviewee is a case and does not represent or allow generalization in the ordinary sense.

This research deals with the "religious-kibbutz girl". All the descriptions and data that follow will be from the point of view of the religious-kibbutz girls. The subjectivity of this study is the point of departure of the research (and does not act as an accompanying variable), since the nature with which the reality is understood directly influences how we see ourselves in reference to knowledge (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994) and that is how what the researcher "will define, measure, and analyze" (Charmaz, 2000, p. 524) is built. Creswell (1998) claimed that the phenomenon should be described as it was experienced by the subjects. This is in line with Denzin and Lincoln (2000, p. 19), who claimed that this kind of research: "… is based on beliefs and insights about the world and how it should be understood to be studied".

Since this research work is focused on a subject that tests aspects through life, rather than on hypotheses (Merriam, 1998; Seidel and Kelle, 1995), there was a serious deliberation about

---

[46] Memos are written facts with ideas concerning coded data and categories as well as emerging theoretical ideas concerning theoretical literature (Pidegeon and Henwood, 1996, p. 95).

using this open approach, since, through research focused on a subject, there is less concern about the creation of artificial behavior because of lack of hypothetical direction (on the part of the girls under investigation). In this way, it is easier to assimilate into the environment of the girl under investigation and it is easy to see what is below the surface.

The reasonable chance of obtaining good cooperation in the field work for this research was based on the assumption that this researcher is part of the "field" (Sciarra, 1999, p. 43). This is in contrast to the opinion of Woods (1996), who was concerned with diversions stemming from the intimate involvement of the researcher. Being a senior resident employee of the kibbutz (and not a full-fledged member), turned her over the years into a confidante of the kibbutz members – a situation that helped her arouse trust and pick up information that even the people within the system itself were not always aware of. The integration into the environment of those under investigation was very natural and it was also possible to see things below the surface, as there was the actual experience of piecing together the knowledge – something that allowed the full 'picture' to 'emerge' from life alongside the girls under investigation (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994, pp. 31-32), as "the observer is a part of what is being observed and not separate from it" (Charmaz, 2000, p. 524; Simons, 1996).

This was useful to achieve authenticity: the researcher was flexible enough to pick up the complexity of the different viewpoints of the interviewees, and they saw her as credible and not someone who came to examine their opinions from 'within the system'.

This point was prominent in a certain case when after 15 min of an interview, one of the interviewees asked for confirmation that the interviewer had understood her correctly and that what she was saying would be quoted anonymously. When she was assured that this was so, she asked if she could repeat her answers to questions she had already answered but this time she answered them differently (open, specific, and somewhat rebellious). In another incident, one of the interviewees revealed and emphasized: "I am answering this today as a secular person, something that no one on the kibbutz knows yet, except you", and she was not the only one who pointed out that she felt a cognitive dissonance in dealing with some of the questions.

The variety of opinions heard and the body language expressed often pointed to what has been written about the problem of 'objectivity/subjectivity' in research of this kind. During the course of the research, there was great awareness that familiarity with the people and the

situations might cause a subjective diversion. Therefore, the ability to be detached and 'see' things from the side, was used.

In order to persist with the objective of credibility, several steps were taken. One, writing a reliable report, with the impressions of the researcher written down alongside the interview and differentiated from the answers of the interviewees. Clarifying questions were asked and there was a serious attempt to more correctly understand the general or unfocused answers. In addition, there was consultation with kibbutz members from outside the 'field' in order to examine if the messages in the interviews had been understood correctly.

Unique aspects of the culture and education of the religious-kibbutz girl were examined according to the naturalistic model (Moss, 1996). The research questions [according to the American Educational Research Association (AERA) (2003) and Kasminesky (2005, p. 16)], familiarity with the field and its people, as well as collection of material and related research studies on the subject – are what dictated the choice of a research approach and, accordingly, the use of appropriate tools (Lincoln, 2002, p. 327; Lincoln and Guba, 1985). This point of departure guided the direction of the research strategy, the methods of data collection, categorization, and analysis, and presentation of the research tools and findings.

The above-mentioned model relates to any situation as a complete system whose objectives are description, interpretation, and discussion. The research tools for the collection and analysis of data were planned in advance, but the final choice was made during the actual activity in accordance with the initial conditions and tools expressed as feelings. Several external means were also included: decisions made by the religious kibbutzim at various conferences, perusal of the kibbutz regulations, protocols, interviews (formal and informal), letters, documents, and articles (Shkedi, 2003, pp. 57-58; Merriam, 1985).

For the purpose of the study, observations were also conducted. The position of the observer/researcher in this work fluctuated between being a participating observer and being an ordinary observer. The fact that the researcher has lived for a number of years in one of the kibbutzim under investigation did not allow her to act as an ordinary, distant observer.

For the purpose of this study, different types of interviews were used: the open interview and the focused interview. Use of the open interview helped bring about a deeper understanding of the positions and opinions of those under investigation, and better relations of trust were established between them and the researcher (Riesman, 1993; Brunner, 1990, p. 115). Along

with this, the difficulty the researcher confronted in the data processing and their arrangement into categories for the sake of analysis, cannot be ignored (Pidgeon and Henwood, 1996).

The guided and focused interview was used in this study. This type of interview was conducted according to written dictate detailing the research subjects, but the wording and arrangement of the questions were not predetermined (Dey, 1993). During the interview, the researcher could react to new points raised by the interviewee, leading to structuring of significant things said (Mishler, 1986). She could also initiate profound discussions and relate to topics that did not receive sufficient attention (if any) in the open interview (Jovchelovitch and Bauner, 2000).

In this study, this type of interview was used especially in the case of interviews that were conducted with people not personally known to the researcher and those who do not live on the same kibbutz as her. Certain advantages of using this interview method were obtaining personal reactions and making good use of the time while relating to the important points. The systematic style of the interview facilitates the comparison of what the various interviewees have said and also allows the interviewee to express an opinion.

Statistical analysis was also used in this. Data of matriculation grades, as kept on record in the high school, were used for the purpose of comparison to verbal reports and as an aid in understanding the topic. All of the above-mentioned factors contributed information for understanding the development of the processes of the topic in addition to data obtained from the open observations and the interviews (Charmaz, 1983, p. 120), and, thus, pointed out areas that the researchers can continue to study.

In this way, a certain combination of qualitative and quantitative methodologies was used. This kind of combination is suggested by several researchers (Creswell, 2003; Lincoln and Guba, 2002, pp. 163-188; Huberman and Miles, 1994) as, in their opinion, it strengthens the internal and external validity of the research [although we should mention Creswell (2003), who emphasized that qualitative research represents a pilot study that supports or complements quantitative research, but does not stand on its own.] Of course the combination of the two approaches demands maximum differentiation between completion of data and their strength using the two approaches, and using structures that exist in one approach and which are run on data in the other approach (since the use of the second requires the development of methods to compare different scales of classification).

An additional research system in the naturalistic approach that contributed to this work is the model determined by Parlett and Hamilton (1976) and called: "Illuminative Evaluation". The uniqueness of this strategy is that it is comprehensive and based on a combination of tools and techniques chosen according to their degree of suitability for each specific case. In this study, several methods to collect data were used. Thus the opinions of Shkedi (2003, p. 69) and Dey (1993) were accepted in order to strengthen the validity of the research findings.

Ongoing "photographing" of the research subjects in one kibbutz and the database that was collected using the technique of the "non-participating observer" (Lieblich et al., 1998, p. 10), both acted as the raw materials for this study: for the basis of the research, to find the research questions, organize them, and adapt them for the purposes of the research, as well as to raise or verify hypotheses. The ongoing "photographing" during the course of life on the kibbutz raised the need to examine the characteristics of the difference between the two periods (= a gap of over 15 years), and the division into kibbutzim (older vs younger kibbutzim) as well as the age groups of the interviewees.

F. Completion of data collection

Since the work is topic-oriented and examines certain predetermined aspects, it contributed to the determination of the time for data collection. This is despite the fact that explicit boundaries of the research were not predetermined and were not explicitly defined.

Along with a more intensive delving into the research, there was growing temptation to be drawn towards focal points of interest, but the desire to temporarily define the boundaries of the research acted as a consideration in preventing this from happening.

There were areas in which a feeling of saturation, which led to duplications without significant and useful reinforcements, helped determine the end of data collection. On the other hand, there was sometimes a feeling that despite the lack of satisfactory data, it would be too hard to obtain additional information, and that was what marked the end of the period of data collection. This was expressed in the "dialogue" between external points of view and field data, and the combination of technical factors as data the researcher used to determine data collection and their analysis (Shkedi, 2003, p. 180).

Upon completion of data collection, it can be summarized that in the study, 44 interviewees from 3 kibbutzim participated. All the kibbutzim were located in the south of the country (Yavne, Sa'ad, and Alumim). All the interviewees had completed 12 years of school in kibbutz educational facilities. They all attended the same high school.

This is a long-term research study: the interviews were conducted in two different periods – with 15 years between one period and the next. In each period, two age groups were interviewed. One group included girls aged 16-17 (11th-12th graders) who were still students in the kibbutz joint educational framework, and the second group included girls aged 19-21 (during their army service), graduates of the kibbutz schools. Comparison of the two age groups during the two periods examined how the distance of time (short and long) affected each group in relation to their outlook on the topics of bat mitzvah and the study of Gemara – as aspects that made them unique as girls of the religious kibbutz.