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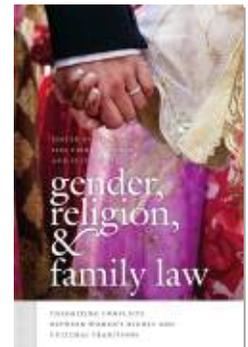
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IRIT KOREN

Chapter Eight Women, Resources, and Changing the Religious System A Case Study of the Orthodox Jewish Wedding Ritual

[W]omen even as subordinate players, always play an active part that goes beyond the dichotomy of victimization/acceptance, a dichotomy that flattens out a complex and ambiguous agency in which women accept, accommodate, ignore, resist, or protest sometimes all at the same time. —*Arlene Elowe MacLeod*[1]

For the last few years I have been researching a small, yet growing number of Modern Orthodox women in Israel who seek to challenge, resist, or adapt the Orthodox wedding ritual to transform it into an expression of their own identity, values, and ideals. These women identified themselves both as Orthodox and as feminists or having feminist consciousness, at least to some degree. These two identities are often at odds, since values embraced by feminism and Orthodoxy might be experienced as contradictory to each other. In my research, I have found that the wedding ritual is a prime context in which to examine the accommodation of these two identities, Orthodox and feminist.

For many Orthodox feminist women this ritual is a point of contention because, in halakhah, the wedding ritual marks the groom's acquisition of the sexual rights of the bride, and that legal action underlies many of the customs associated with the ritual itself as well as causes significant implications in case of divorce. The women I studied sought to modify the ritual and their approach to it in ways meant to put them on more of an equal footing with their husbands, both through visual performance and by confronting the ritual's legal construction.

The modifications and challenges the women did to their wedding ritual required them to negotiate extensively with their social environment: their husbands-to-be, parents, and rabbis.

The focus of this chapter is to identify and analyze what are the *resources* that the women found necessary in order to begin negotiating and changing parts of the wedding ritual. However, since these women chose not to leave the religious system but rather work from within it, they also needed to have resources that would enable them to remain in the system despite their criticism of it or when the changes they wished to do were not accepted. While one might argue that staying in a religious system in spite of one's criticism and objection is an act of weakness rather than an act of strength, I feel otherwise. Indeed there are instances in which staying in the religious system is a sign of weakness, but this is not the case with these brides. For these women, the option of the secular world is open and available. They can choose to leave their religious world at any time. Therefore it is my contention that in this case, choosing to maintain and work within the religious structure that sometimes contradicts some of their own values is an act of strength and requires social, emotional, and intellectual resources as well. This understanding of the resources these women have will finally lead me to the explanation of why it is this specific group of women who initiates this phenomenon of challenging the wedding ritual, thus the religious system, rather than other groups of women such as secular brides or ultra-Orthodox brides.

Background

The research methodology was qualitative and included interviews with twenty-five religious women for whom the wedding ritual was a point of contention. In order to further understand their social context, I also interviewed some of the mothers, fathers, and husbands as well as some of the rabbis who performed the weddings. In addition, I was a participant observer in many of these women's weddings.

When I started the research I was looking to interview women who defined themselves as religious[2] and who have tried to challenge their wedding rituals in different ways. I reached these women through the "snowball" method — each interviewee sending me to another woman who she thought would answer this

definition. The women I studied composed a fairly homogeneous group. All were in their mid-twenties to mid-thirties at the time of their marriage, and all of the marriages took place within the past decade; all are well educated both in the religious and secular realm; and all lived in Jerusalem while single, specifically in the neighborhoods of Rehavia, Katamon, and Baka.[3] Many of them either were immigrants of English-speaking countries, came from families whose origins were English-speaking countries, or married English-speaking men. This, I believe, comes as no surprise, since feminism and specifically religious feminism was imported, at least initially, by feminist women who immigrated from the United States to Israel and brought with them these ideas of gender equality.[4]

Moreover, these women, who identify themselves as religious, feel constrained (to varying degrees) to abide by Jewish law (halakhah). Thus, they evinced a desire to have Orthodox weddings. They did not feel that they could take the path of some secular men and women who opt for egalitarian ceremonies that are not acknowledged by the Orthodox rabbinate, the only body authorized to register Jewish marriages in Israel. Such marriages can be registered only by means of a civil ceremony performed outside the country — a route followed by many secular Israelis in order to avoid the religious ceremony altogether.[5]

Although the women I interviewed are still a local vanguard, I believe this phenomenon is expanding and increasing its influence among the wider Orthodox community and within its discourse in Israel.

The transformative aims of the women's practices can be understood only in the context of the traditional wedding ritual as it is performed in Israel (and throughout the Orthodox Jewish world) today. That ritual comprises the following steps: Before the wedding ceremony, the groom signs the *ketubah*, a contract delineating his financial obligations toward his wife. Then he is led to the bride, who has been sitting in a chair awaiting him. Upon reaching her, he covers her face with a veil. He turns and walks to the huppah (marriage canopy), accompanied by the wedding guests, and awaits the bride there. The bride, similarly, proceeds to the huppah, and upon reaching it, in the Ashkenazi (European Jewish) custom, she circles the groom seven times, accompanied by her mother and mother-in-law to be. Only now does the formal two-part ritual begin. The first part is the *kiddushin* (acquisition) ceremony, in which, following recitation of the betrothal blessing and the blessing over wine, the

man fulfills the active role of acquiring the woman by addressing her with the Hebrew words *Harei at mekudeshet li* ("You are hereby consecrated unto me") while giving her a ring. After this, the *ketubah* is read aloud, separating the two parts of the ritual. Now the second part begins — the *nisu'in* (marriage), in which the *sheva berakhot*, the traditional seven wedding blessings, are read by a man or several men. At the end of the ritual the groom shatters a glass by stomping on it.[6]

Numerous feminist critiques have been leveled against the traditional wedding ritual, specifically targeting the *kiddushin* as an act of acquisition (of the women's sexuality) and, therefore, one of oppression.[7] There are some harsh implications of this legal arrangement, which is still valid in the rabbinical courts in Israel as well as in the rest of the Orthodox Jewish world. Most importantly, a Jewish woman wed by the laws of the Torah can be divorced only by her husband's act of giving her a traditional bill of divorce (*get*). Should her husband stubbornly refuse or otherwise be unable to release her in this way, she will remain a *mesurevet get* or an *agunah*, unable to remarry.[8] In this matter, Jewish law discriminates openly and explicitly between men and women. A *mesurevet get* or *agunah* who chooses to live with another man pays a heavy price. Her children by that man are considered *mamzerim* (bastards), and under religious law neither they nor their offspring for the next ten generations are allowed to marry Jews. Because all marriages between Jews in Israel are governed by Orthodox religious law, such children and their descendants are unable to marry in the State of Israel. In contrast, a married man can have children by another woman without legal sanction.[9]

Critiques have also been leveled at other ritual acts or elements associated with the wedding: the covering of the bride with the veil has been interpreted as symbolically rendering her invisible; the circling of the groom strikes many as indicating that he is at the center, while the bride is at the margins; and the seven blessings, recited by men only, do not give women a voice in this part of the ceremony.

The changes put into place by the women I interviewed can be divided into two realms: the visual realm and the legal realm. The visual realm includes the following three strategies:

(a) Creating a parallel ritual act. The women who adopted this strategy initiated ritual acts that attempted to mirror the traditional male rites. By

setting a female act opposite the male one, they endeavored to create a performance of equality without running afoul of halakhic prohibitions. An example of this is the bride's covering her groom with a *tallith* (prayer shawl) after she is veiled by him or the bride giving the groom a ring as well.

(b) Introducing variations on the ritual act. The women who used this strategy focused on creating a variation on a traditional act, such as circling each other instead of the bride circling the groom alone.

(c) Avoiding a particular ritual act. In this case, not performing the ritualistic act is in itself a performance of protest and objection. Examples of such actions are: avoiding the traditional act of circling the groom altogether or avoiding reading the *ketubah* out loud. [10]

As for the legal realm, the strategy typically does not involve a public performance under the huppah; rather it seeks to alter the acquisitional nature of the ritual. One way the brides did so was to draft and sign documents in the presence of an attorney, with the intention of diminishing the legal status of *kiddushin* as an act of acquisition. The core legal document employed in this strategy is the prenuptial agreement, called the "Agreement for Mutual Respect,"[11] which purports to supplement the *ketubah* by stipulating the exercise of economic pressure, in the form of increased alimony payments, in the case of a man refusing to give his wife her *get* (or of her refusing to receive it).[12]

Women, Religion, Agency, and Resources

The brides I have interviewed are unique in that they function as social agents of change in their religious system. Susan Sered, who writes about female agency in the context of religion, argues that when analyzing gender conflict in religious systems, it is crucial to understand that two ontologically different sets of issues are involved. The first set is "women" — female people who have varying degrees of agency within specific social situations. The second set is "Woman" — a symbolic construct mixing gender, sex, and sexuality. This construct is comprised of allegory, metaphor, fantasy, and (at least in male dominant religions) men's psychological projections."[13] Sered continues to argue that "'Woman' as a symbol is often associated with some of the deepest and most compelling theological and mythological structures

in a religious tradition."[14] Therefore, these symbolic structures influence and shape women's behavior and attitudes. Hence the ability of women to enter a negotiation on changing the religious system depends on their own perception of themselves as "women" or as the "Woman." Sered thus concludes that "the more agency women have, the more control they have over the creation and interpretation of symbols. Where any particular group of women falls along the agent-symbol continuum, depends on their access to social resources."[15]

Sered then looks specifically at brides and argues that in the context of women's agency, brides seem to be a special group of women, since they embody powerful social forces such as sexuality and reproduction that are associated with women and are also performed ritually. Therefore, brides have almost no access to social resources. Moreover, they themselves are perceived by society as a social resource.[16]

The uniqueness of the group of women I have investigated is that they act as social agents of change within a religious system — an unusual thing in traditional societies, specifically for women. Moreover, the group of women in this research are characterized, as I will demonstrate later, by their access to many resources.

During my interviews with them, I have asked myself how these women live in this tension between modernity and tradition. I have tried to understand what are the social, personal, and intellectual resources that enable them to deal with the complex social location they choose to be in, specifically since they have the option to leave the religious world or, alternatively, to abandon feminist values altogether. I believe that part of the answer to these questions lies in understanding the resources these women possess.

Examining the resources of social groups is one way that the field of sociology uses in order to understand social processes. There is an understanding that people use the same resources in different ways to achieve different things. In this article I will look at the resources that these women use in order to maintain their acrobatic walk on a very thin rope. I have found five different recourses, or using an analogy — five different coins — these women use. Some brides use one side of the coin in one instance, while using the other side of the coin in a different instance. In other words, they use different sides of the coin either to achieve change in the wedding ritual or to accept the ritual and the religious system as it is.

As apposed to Sered's conclusion regarding the lack of resources of brides, the brides in my study did have access to many social resources. Therefore, they made themselves social agents who strived to challenge and change, if only in part, the religious symbols of the wedding ritual and, thus, impact the religious system as a whole. Their access to resources can be explained partially due to the fact that for the most part these brides were mature adults (in their late twenties or early thirties) as well as highly educated. Hence, since these brides were characterized as older and educated, they were able to "acquire more agency and lose their magnetism, as objects of symbolization."[17]

The Resources of the Brides

I categorized the resources utilized by the brides in my study into six groupings. These resources were used by the same women or by different women as a flexible currency at times in order to challenge and resist the wedding ritual, and at other times to accept the system as it is or, alternatively, to help them let go of their own wishes in times that the negotiation failed.

However, in addition to each one of these resources, which could be used in opposing ways, I found an additional resource that I view as an umbrella resource used by all the women in the same way. I see this resource, which I named "the ability to contain dissonance," as a personality trait that enabled these brides to enter these complex negotiations to begin with. These women's ability to embrace the tension in their life enabled them to engage in their multifaceted identity as religious and as modern and feminist women. On the surface, it seems that these women could have chosen a much easier path to end the identity dissonance they experienced. One way to do so is by crossing the line and moving to the secular world, defining themselves only as modern and feminist women. In this case, their motivation to identify and to justify the religious system would be lessened, and thus, if they still had chosen to get married in a traditional wedding they would most probably not feel the need to challenge it. Rather they could go through the ritualistic motions without expecting them to relate to their identity and values. Another option would have been to give up their feminist identity and focus mainly on their religious identity, thus having no motivation to challenge the wedding ritual and the

religious system as a whole. However, none of these women chose either option and instead have chosen to live within this tension and negotiate their reality.

The ability of theses women to embrace their conflicting identities stands in opposition to some findings. According to different studies, individuals try to avoid painful cognitive dissonance, which is created from contradicting sets of beliefs, by adjusting one set of beliefs to the other in a way that protects them.[18] The need people have to diminish their cognitive dissonance is not a preference but rather a necessity. Therefore, they are driven to act in a certain way that will end the disharmony between their different cognitive representations.[19]

In the context of modern religious women, research found that the more women are expecting equality in different social contexts, the more the roles and the images that religious systems offer them are in discrepancy with their positive self-evaluation to which they are educated. Once again, although one might expect that this fact would encourage women to leave their religion, the findings point out that a high proportion of women choose not to do so.[20]

It seems that the aspirations of the brides in my research — to stay within the religious system and to work within it — relate to a deep identification they have with larger parts of this system. They do not feel estranged from the system; rather they wish to change the system specifically because they identify with it. Thus these two ideological stances: the religious and the modern are intertwined with each other and stem from each other. Tehila, one of my interviewees, describes this complexity:

> In my eyes to be religious is to listen. It is to implement the moral wishes of God in an authentic way every moment, and this wish is something that changes. When one reads the Bible and understands that it nurtures a patriarchic society, then it undermines the concept that the Torah was given from God, since how could it be that God encourages a patriarchic society? The theologian Tamar Ross solves this problem by saying that the revelation of God is a continuous one. In each time period, it reveals the moral message suited to meeting the challenges faced by that generation and advancing the world.[21]

Tehila thus recruits the feminist theological discourse to explain her double identity and hence transforms her feminist perception to something that is inherent to the religious system itself.

Rivki, an Israeli religious feminist activist, gives another example of this hybrid identity and her approach to this conflict when she says, "When it comes to being [a modern woman like] an attorney general, but you can not pray [like men], it results in a social blowing up with a lot of emotions involved. And then some women stop praying altogether, some women make peace with it, and some women create something new."

Indeed many women in my research made peace with this conflict of identity by creating something new, such as new and innovative interpretations and actions regarding the wedding ritual. They chose to change the system within but not to "stop praying altogether." These women roam between the different worlds, the religious and the modern, and decide in each social situation which structure of interpretation they accept — the feminist one or the traditional one.

First Resource: Knowledge of Torah — "And a Tree to Be Desired to Make One Wise"

The ideal of studying Torah was always a central value in the Jewish world. Boys were directed, from a very young age, to dedicate themselves to the study of Torah and to excel in it. At the same time, there were marginal groups who were not able to access this knowledge due to social or economic status, such as women. The prohibition to teach women Torah became, with time, an ideal in itself. This prohibition stems from the Talmudic saying of Rabbi Eliezer: "Every one who teaches his daughter Torah, these teach her folly [or, lasciviousness]" (Mishnah, Sotah 3:4). This saying, which was originally more a recommendation than a prohibition, became, with time, an all-encompassing ban and an impassable boundary for any woman who wished to study Torah.[22] In this sense Jewish society created a deliberate legacy of illiteracy for women by closing the gates of religious knowledge to them.[23]

In the context of Jewish women and religious literacy, Jewish girls were allowed to enter religious education through the Beis Yakov schools only in the nineteenth century. This occurred originally in order to teach these girls how to become better religious wives and mothers who could maintain and pass on the Jewish tradition to their children. Here, too, religious education had the unintended consequence of women undergoing personal and social changes

that went beyond the scope of what was intended for them. Eventually by the twentieth century, women pushed the boundaries of learning and entered the world of Talmud, which until then had belonged to men only. This knowledge enabled them to start interpreting and negotiating the religious system in a way that wasn't done beforehand. From the moment women tasted the tree of knowledge, they discovered that there was no way back. This knowledge changed not only them, but also social norms and practices as well.[24] Thus the entrance of women to religious literacy has created a social revolution.[25]

Therefore, the most important resource, in my view, possessed by most of these women was an intellectual one — Jewish religious literacy. Here, the feminist saying "Knowledge is power" takes on real meaning. Many of my interviewees had a master's degree or were working on their PhD in Jewish studies specifically in the areas of Talmud and Jewish thought. Others have learned for a significant amount of time in one of the many *batei midrashot* (Torah houses of study) that are open to women and are spread throughout different parts of Israel, mainly Jerusalem. The relationship between the resource of knowledge and social change has been discussed extensively in research concerning literacy.[26] This perhaps can explain why their resource of religious knowledge enabled these women to start a negotiation vis-à-vis their social environment.

The women in my study, who had a strong command of religious knowledge, felt a certain sense of ownership of the religious texts,[27] and this enabled them to move on to the next stage of changing religious praxis. The fact that these women have access to religious texts — meaning they are able to locate the texts, understand them, and interpret them — also enabled these women to take issue with these texts and challenge conventional applications. However, having this literacy was not always a sufficient resource to allow these women to bring about change, in that religious authority figures, including rabbis, often did not view the women as legitimate partners in a discussion of how to interpret religious texts, precisely because they are women. Oshrat's story demonstrates this point very well. Oshrat, a learned Talmudic scholar herself, wanted women to read some of the seven blessings under her huppah. After she looked at the various sources from the Talmud, she concluded that there is no apparent prohibition to prevent this. Yet she still wanted to get a formal halakhic affirmation. Therefore she asked to meet the head of the religious court in Jerusalem. Oshrat describes this meeting as follows:

I was in a dream world. I thought that if I will just ask someone what the halakhah is regarding this issue, it will all work out. . . . I went to ask him [the head of the religious court] and it was simply terrible. I left there crying. He treated me as if I am not part of the Jewish nation. . . . He yelled at me, "You are coming from the Diaspora and bringing with you all this feminism to Jewish ideas. . . . He didn't respond to my halakhic question at all. . . .

At first, I thought we were having a conversation, and I tried to tell him that this doesn't come from outside of Judaism. There is a source in the Talmud that talks about the ways the priests would let women participate, to some extent, in the sacrificing of animals' rituals [by allowing them to lay their hands on the animals' heads]. From there you can see that women wished to actively participate in the mitzvah [religious commandment] . . . so I tried to say that this aspect was always in our tradition, but this was not a conversation. He just kept yelling at me. It was terrible.

This story demonstrates how Oshrat's knowledge and religious arguments were irrelevant. Her knowledge and arguments were not taken into account in her negotiation with the rabbi.

There is a flip side to this coin. The resource of religious literacy was used by some of the women, not in opposition to religious leaders or religious law regarding the wedding ritual, but internally in order to enable them to remain within the system without challenging it. The ownership these women felt they have of the texts made it possible for them to reinterpret, reimagine, and even find feminist voices in the different wedding actions, which in turn enabled them to develop a discourse that could undermine the traditional patriarchal reading of the wedding ritual without making any actual changes.

Second Resource: Age —
"When Will You Get Married Already?"

Similar to Sered's argument that the older and more educated the brides are, the more they acquire an ability to become social agents, in this case it also seems that the fact that these women married relatively late in life can help to explain, in part, their ability to challenge the religious tradition and establishment and to strive for change.

One might not understand why marrying in one's late twenties or mid-thirties should be a significant factor or resource for these women. However, the social context should be taken into consideration. In Orthodox society there is an expectation that women and men will get married in their early twenties. Moreover, since it is forbidden for men and women who date to have any physical contact, they are expected to make their decision relatively fast and get married a few months following their introduction. The phenomenon of "elderly bachelors" and single women is a new and modern phenomenon in the religious world, and many religious leaders see it as an illness spreading in the religious society.[28]

Due to this "elderly" singlehood, these women leave the traditional confines of their parents' homes and wander to Jerusalem, which attracts them because of the unique social scene there, which includes many single men and women and a relatively open religious environment. During this time they are exposed to the liberal, modern, pluralistic, and feminist discourse prevalent in many social circles in these neighborhoods. Living in these neighborhoods influences their identity and their religious conceptions. Their acquaintance with different synagogues, friends, and political and social movements exposes them, among other things, to egalitarian ideas that they have not been aware of or exposed to beforehand. These women thus arrive at their weddings after living away from their parents for a while and after having had the opportunity to construct their own ideas about religion and social roles.[29] Hence, they come to their wedding relatively informed about feminist notions and about the sort of changes that could be made to the traditional ritual. Their relatively old age at the time of marriage provide them the maturity, strength, and crystallized opinions that enable them to enter into an extensive negotiation about their marriage.

The flip side of this coin is that the older age of these women may have also been a factor in these brides' ability not to be seduced to the "all or nothing" paradigm, hence choosing one system value over the other. This "all or nothing" view is typical of young adults and teens. It is not accidental that the social revolutions happening in the 1960s (e.g., the civil rights movement, Malcolm X, the veterans movement, the feminist movement) were led by young people and students.[30]

Research shows that young women who lived in the tension of modernity and religion tend to either leave religion or give up modern and feminist values

and notions.[31] As opposed to these young women who try to avoid the conflict of living in a complex world by choosing one world over the other, the brides in my research, perhaps because they were older, came to their marriage with a complex consciousness that had ripened over a long time. Hence they were able to contain this complex reality and live within both value systems while consistently maneuvering between them.

Third Resource: A Defined Identity — Between a Feminist and a Religious Identity

"I AM DEFINITELY A FEMINIST"

Another resource that stood out was the bride's feminist identity or feminist consciousness. One of the definitions of feminist consciousness or "gender consciousness" is an "identification with women, recognition of the interests and problems women share, and support for collective efforts to realize women's interest and alleviate their problems. . . . [G]ender consciousness clearly refers to the nontraditional conception of women's role typically associated with feminism."[32] The reason a feminist identity or feminist consciousness is so powerful is because it challenges the social system of gender power relations as well as contains "a shared group identity, and a growing politicization resulting in a social movement."[33] Therefore, it has the potential power to create changes in these relations.

The women I interviewed differed from each other regarding the strength of their feminist consciousness and, accordingly, the strength of their identification as feminists. When I approached the women about being interviewed, some of them hurried to clarify that they do not identify themselves as feminists. However, during the interview, a strong feminist identity or consciousness clearly emerged. It seems that there was a gap between the women's self-identification as feminist and their willingness to identify themselves publicly as feminists. This might have to do with the negative and hostile attitudes of society generally and their society in specific in regard to the notion of feminism and feminists themselves. It is not surprising then that some of the brides interviewed for my research differentiated between their feminist consciousness and their identity as feminist, while others strongly owned their feminist

identity, like Oshrat, who proclaims, "I am definitely a feminist." Nevertheless, in both cases the women expressed their feminist notions and values.

Research has demonstrated that while feminist opinion (some might refer to this as feminist consciousness as well) and feminist identity are two concepts that relate to each other, they are not always identical to each other.[34] The willingness to embrace a feminist identity publicly is related to a higher level of feminist consciousness. When women are willing to label themselves as feminists, they also tend to take upon themselves feminist activism — participating in more public activities that relate to women's issues and rights.[35]

Hence, the women in my study who embraced their feminist identity were those who challenged the traditional ritual most aggressively and most politically; that is, I identified a relationship between the depth of the feminist identity and the radicalism of the changes to the ritual. In this sense, these brides used this personality resource that enabled them to challenge the wedding ritual and, therefore, the religious system in an extensive way. This is opposed to women who clearly had a feminist consciousness but refrained from identifying themselves as feminist.

"TRADITION DOES A LOT FOR ME"

The flip side of having a strong feminist identity is embracing one's religious identity on account of the feminist identity. Identifying with tradition enabled some of the brides to remain comfortable with refraining from change on some fronts or accepting tradition for what it is when changing it was impossible or too difficult. Some of my subjects expressed their feeling that religious life is a package deal, with more benefits than disadvantages on the whole; they spoke of being part of a dynasty, and of doing what their grandmothers and grandfathers had done; they spoke of the historical significance of tradition as something empowering for them. Ella put it this way: "Tradition does a lot for me, and tradition has a lot of power. That is the main thing for me."

When some of the brides had to choose in different instances between the "hierarchical meaning structure" and the "feminist meaning structure" for their wedding ritual, they deliberately chose the first meaning structure. In these instances, they emphasized the different elements of the rituals that they felt they could identify with. Hence, embracing the religious identity enabled them to stay within the given structure without challenging it.

This strategy isn't typical of Jewish women only. Women from different religions often express their identification with their tradition, stating that generally religion is good even when it has the negative attribute of discriminating against them. They deal with this cognitive dissonance by reframing and reinterpreting the negative elements in their religion in a more positive light. This conception enables them to continue on with their religious life.[36] It seems then that some of the brides I interviewed, in certain circumstances, chose to stress their feeling of overall satisfaction with the religious experience they live in. Therefore, they are willing to ignore certain aspects of gender discrimination that exist in the tradition.

Thus the uniqueness of most of these brides was in their ability to maneuver between embracing their feminist identity and their religious identity, choosing accordingly in each instance between the feminist meaning structure and the hierarchical meaning structure.

Fourth Resource: Emotional Managements — Between Negative and Positive Management

Another resource that enabled these brides to navigate the continuum of change and tradition was the emotional management these brides conducted within themselves. According to Arlie Hochschild, "emotional management" is what we do to our emotions to tailor them for particular situations. When there is a conflict between circumstances and ideology, women and men alike tend to resort to a strategy of emotional management to enable them to act appropriately according to the convention of one's gender and culture.[37] Due to social constructions, education, and culture, the way women manage their emotions is different from how men do so. Women are socially constructed to master their feelings of anger and aggression and work on positive emotions and on the appearance of "being nice girls," while men are constructed to mask feelings of fear and vulnerability.[38]

However, in the case of these women, they were able, on the one hand, to embrace their emotions of anger, enabling them to enter the negotiation on the wedding ritual. On the other hand, these women were able to repress feelings of anger when they felt that the expression of anger would be unproductive, and instead to reinforce feelings of happiness and love.

Based on my research, I would argue that in order to bring about change to the religious framework and start negotiations with the husband, family, and rabbis, the emotional management that my subjects needed to employ was in the nature of *embracing the negative emotions of anger, disappointment, frustration, and stirring up.* These women expressed negative emotions concerning the gap between their feminist values and the hierarchical wedding ritual in which men are more legally powerful and performatively visible compared to women. Embracing their feelings of anger allowed these brides to use this resource to justify their need for change.

Orly Benjamin, in her research about emotional management, refers to anger as a powerful resource that enables one to enter a negotiation in a hierarchical system. She calls this process "unsilencing," the process in which the understanding of oppression defeats the traditional understanding in any given situation, to the extent that the new interpretation can be voiced.[39]

Anger is therefore a significant resource used in order for one to create change. It is particularly significant for women, since women usually find it hard to express anger.[40] According to Hochschild, the reason for this is because anger is perceived as sabotaging the attachment with others, which is counter to how women construct their identity in relations to others.[41] Harriet Lerner explains that from a social perspective it is useful for women to distance themselves from feelings of anger and do positive emotional management, because Western culture does not look kindly upon "angry women."[42] Angry women are perceived as a threat because the anger signals the need for change to the status quo. According to Lerner, even when society is empathetic to the goals of equality, they perceive "angry women" as an annoyance to society. For women, "the direct expression of anger, especially at men, makes us unladylike, unfeminine, unmaternal, sexually unattractive. . . . Even our language condemns such women as 'shrews,' 'witches,' 'bitches,' 'hags,' 'nags,' 'man haters,' and 'castrators.'"[43]

Women are thus socialized to believe that conflict with men or with male frameworks is the wrong approach and instead they must learn to sublimate anger into positive emotions.[44] Women (like other oppressed groups) lack the expertise in dealing directly with conflict, since culturally these emotions and the behavior that is associated with conflict were suppressed within them.

Acknowledging this social construction helps women to understand the uniqueness of the resource of engaging in negative emotional management, especially in the context of their wedding, when women are expected to be the model of femininity. Yet, although a resource, women's anger did not always guarantee their success in changing the ritual. Many times they found themselves giving up or compromising on their wishes in spite of their anger toward the religious system. This complexity is expressed in Michal's interview when she states, "I am exhausted," or Tehila's interview when she says, "One needs to be a real fighter to make a change." Yet the significance of negative emotional management and, specifically, the ability to embrace feelings of anger is that, at least in regard to some situations, these women were able to start a negotiation on the hierarchical meaning structure and, thus, a process of actual change.

"IN THE NAME OF LOVE"

The flip side of this coin is a capacity to repress feelings of anger and engage in *positive emotional management.* Women used this resource in order to help them to remain within the traditional religious framework. They did this by putting aside feelings of anger, insult, and hurt and emphasizing feelings of joy, love, and excitement.

One might ask: if positive emotional management is what women are constructed to do, how then can engaging in positive emotional management be a resource? It is my belief that in the case of my brides, it becomes a resource because the women who choose to engage in positive emotional management do so consciously, compared to other women who might be doing this as a default reaction. The brides in my study have a feminist awareness and realize the problematic aspects of the ritual and the religious system as a whole. Therefore, choosing to put aside their frustration and anger in regard to some or most of the elements relating to the wedding is, in this context, a resource that helps them to stay in the religious system, rather than leaving it. Ella expresses her positive emotional management in the following way:

> What really excited me was that I was getting married; the rest is not that significant. . . . You see *I don't have a lot of anger*, and I think you need to be

smart about it. . . . That is, I chose a rabbi who understands my questions and where I am coming from with these questions. But *it is a shame if your starting point should be that of anger.* There are enough ways today to be creative and deal with this anger.

Michal, another bride interviewed after her marriage, also talks about her positive feelings that enabled her to make at least some peace with the ritual:

I am not a person who likes to surrender, but today in the structure of my life and in the structure of making peace within my house I need to reach compromises that are difficult for me but that I reach them in *the name of love* I guess, kind of.

While Ella stresses again and again her lack of anger and the different ways she deals with her questions that enable her to make compromises, Michal stresses her love, which helped her to give up on her desires regarding religion, in general, and specifically in reference to her wedding, although it is important to note the hesitation in her words when she says "I guess" and "kind of." Both women refer to the positive emotional work they do in order to maintain their life with their spouses and the tradition.

Fifth Resource: Egalitarian Couple-hood

Many of the women used their husbands-to-be as their allies and as a social resource. As with the other resources, this was sometimes used to initiate change and sometimes to make peace with and accept the problematic elements of the wedding.

THE PERSONAL IS POLITICAL

In some cases the future husband became someone who supported the brides in their efforts to challenge the religious establishment. In this regard, the brides and their grooms became a coalition, a united front in the face of their families and the officiating rabbis. Thus these brides were able to create changes in the wedding ritual either because their spouses shared the wish to challenge the

wedding ritual, since they viewed themselves as obligated to feminist values, or because they agreed to cooperate with their brides' wishes, even if they felt that this was not their initial agenda.

These women felt that they had an egalitarian couple-hood, and perhaps because of that, they wanted to make a change on the social level. They not only wished to express their egalitarian couple-hood in a public way, but they also wished to express their political and social ideas about gender equality and tradition. Moreover, the brides who used their grooms to create a partnership to help them change the ritual were not afraid that their grooms would use the power given them by the ritual in the event the couple ended up divorcing. Regardless, they still harnessed their grooms to affect a type of social change that they did not necessarily see as relevant to their own lives. They did this by signing privately or publicly a prenuptial agreement that serves as a legal strategy of resistance. In this regard, the personal became political.

According to Orly Benjamin, the estimation of the chances for cooperation affects the estimation of the risk involved in the woman's speaking up about gender issues and, thus, the chances of her moving from a stance of silence to a stance of voicing her wishes. However, within heterosexual frameworks, cooperation will not take place until the structure of male dominance based on male rights is challenged by an alternative masculinity based on caring.[45]

The women who chose to use the resource of creating a coalition with their "egalitarian spouse" could do so because their men had given up on the "structure of male dominance," as Benjamin puts it. These men chose to give up on their powerful stance in order to create a wedding ritual that expresses both an egalitarian and mutual relationship.

Although most of the coalitions were done with the spouses, some of the coalitions also involved one or more parents who stood in opposition to the rabbi. Others used their rabbi as part of a coalition to stand opposite the parents who were resistant to wedding changes; the rabbi was used to convince them that there is no halakhic problem with the change the couple wished for. Some brides used their girlfriends who had done similar changes as additional allies and as a support peer group. It seems that the more people the brides had in their coalitions, the easier, more productive, and more radical their negotiations and, therefore, actual changes were.

Unlike women who used their spouses as a resource to affect social and political change, there were brides who used the same resource to avoid making a change and hence separated the personal from the political. The saying "The personal is political," which has became a motto for many feminist women, seemed irrelevant to them. This stance explains why most of the brides did not end up signing a prenuptial agreement, which can be viewed as the most radical action in regard to undermining the legal construction of the traditional wedding ritual. These women used their partners to emphasize that the equality of their own relationships did not need expression in the marriage ritual. They argued that the ritual does not express their own relationships, and that was precisely why they could accept the ritual as it is, in spite of its inequality. They felt that their husbands would not abuse the power the *kiddushin* act gave them and so were not concerned about the existence of this power. They stressed the mutuality of their relationship and their feelings of assurance in their marriage and in the character of their husbands. Vered and Rivki express this stance when they say:

> Then and also today I feel that the marriage is more important then the wedding. . . . *Essentially we have a strong egalitarian relationship* . . . and I also think that I told you that you need to choose what you are going to argue about. *It was more important to me that the content of our marriage will be more significant than the external elements.* (Vered)

> It [the element of the *kiddushin*] did not bother *us.* The element of acquisition did not bother *us* because it was clear that *we have a very equal relationship that stems from [a mutual] agreement.* It was clear that he wasn't buying me . . . that it is a ritual which is based on an ancient time like any other halakhah that *we* are committed to, and we interpret it. (Rivki)

Both Vered and Rivki use their egalitarian relationship to explain why they have not entered the negotiation of changing the legal construction of their wedding ritual with all its legal implications. Some brides, like Vered, emphasized that the egalitarianism in their marriage is expressed in the essential and the significant parts of their day-to-day life rather

than in the wedding ritual. Others, like Rivki, moved to talk in the plural voice — us — when they described their relationship in the context of the marriage ritual. Arlie Hochschild refers to this type of speech maneuver and argues:

> Marriage both bridges and obscures the gap between the resources available to men and those available to women. Because men and women do try to love one another — to cooperate in making love, making babies, and making a life together — the very closeness of the bond they accept calls for some disguise of subordination. There will be talk in the "we" mode . . . and the idea among women that they are equal in the ways that "really count."[46]

Indeed many of my brides created a discourse that used the plural form to emphasize the personal sphere and to decrease the importance of the ritual and, thus, the public sphere.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have built a model that refers to social, personal, and intellectual resources that women drew upon either to change gender relations and religious symbols or to remain within these power relations. These resources were used by the brides as a flexible currency, using some more than others and making concessions and exchanges.

Ultimately, what carries the day is the combined effect of the umbrella resource — the ability to contain dissonance — with the other five resources. This exceptional combination of resources can also explain why it is specifically the religious modern women who initiate this phenomenon of challenging the traditional wedding ritual as opposed to ultra-Orthodox women or secular women. The latter, who might have a feminist consciousness, lack commitment to or involvement in a traditional religious framework. Thus, these women do not feel a need to change the religious world, since they feel it is not relevant to their lives. Furthermore, even if they wanted to effect change, they lack the religious literacy that is needed to negotiate the boundaries of the religious system. The converse is true as well — that is, having religious knowledge, like many ultra-Orthodox women have, will not initiate change when there is no

feminist consciousness. In addition they lack the specific type of religious knowledge that can create change. Ultra-Orthodox women who learn are still prohibited from learning Talmud, thus they are barred from the literacy and social power that are allowed for men only. The way these women learn, as opposed to how the women in my research learn, does not elevate them to a point that makes them wish to change the system. They accept a priori the social structure as it is, and their limited religious literacy does not change that.[47] This is why it is specifically those women who find themselves at the junction of modernity and religion who have the power to create change from within.

Finally, I wish to refer to the continuum of the categories of the symbolic "Woman" versus the agency of "women" with which I started my article. Susan Sered claims that "[a]s women become less 'physical' or less 'gendered' — that is as they become older or more educated, they acquire more agency and lose their magnetism as objects of symbolization. In other words, the power to determine the ontological status of oneself or of others is a reflection of access to social resources."[48] This might explain in part why the brides in my study were able to act as social agents. On the one hand, these brides, just by being brides, symbolize the idealized "Woman." On the other hand, the fact that they were married comparatively late, possessed higher general and Jewish education, and had access to other resources rendered them as "women" — social agents of change and renovation of the Jewish ritual and tradition.

While some feminist scholars might criticize these women for staying within the religious system with its patriarchic and hierarchical construction, I find immense power in these women in their ability to constituently move between the two poles: acceptance and tradition versus rejection and change. This constant maneuvering required not only a significant amount of emotional strength, but also a remarkable ability to use one's different social, intellectual, and personal resources in a complex way — a way that enabled them to live with the cognitive dissonance that characterizes parts of their life.

Finally, further research is required to see if these resources are indeed a model that can be generalized and made applicable for studying different women in different religious contexts who maneuver between tradition and modernity.

Notes

1. Arlene Elowe MacLeod, "Hegemonic Relations and Gender Resistance: The new Veiling as Accommodating Protest in Cairo," *Signs* 17:3 (1992): 533–34.

2. Although I assumed that these women would define themselves as feminist to some degree, I tried to refrain from using this definition when I first approached them, knowing that some of them would reject their identification as feminist, as I will elaborate later on in this chapter.

3. These neighborhoods are the venue of several liberal Jewish study centers and of various types of social, religious, and spiritual activities. Their populations include a sufficient concentration of immigrants from English-speaking countries to constitute a reference group for the women I studied. Many of the religious Jews in these neighborhoods could fairly be characterized as liberal Orthodox, in that they seek to challenge some aspects of Orthodoxy while remaining within the halakhic framework. In this chapter, "halakhah" refers to Jewish law as interpreted by Orthodox rabbis, which is the halakhah that the women I studied had to challenge, resist, and adapt in order to formulate the type of wedding rituals they desired.

4. Although there is a tendency to view Israeli feminism as a by-product of American feminism, Israeli feminism (religious and nonreligious) stands today in its own right and has unique characteristics that are related to the Israeli society on its distinctive challenges and social constructions.

5. There is no civil marriage in Israel, so that matrimony, for all sectors of the population, is governed by religious law (Orthodox Jewish, Moslem, or Christian). However, Israel does recognize civil marriages performed outside its borders. Nevertheless, even if these women get married in a civil court outside of the country, in case of divorce they still need to abide by the religious law and go through the Israeli rabbinate, since there is no civil divorce in Israel today.

6. Some of these ritual acts are considered halakhic requirements (according to Jewish law), such as the act of *kiddushin*, and some are considered only a custom, such as circling the groom by the bride. However, in many cases the rabbis viewed the different traditional acts in different ways. According to what the brides told me, while one rabbi thought that the act of covering the bride is a custom and can be modified, another saw it as a halakhic requirement and did not allow making any changes to it. Moreover, when these women wished to change some elements of the wedding ritual, some rabbis admitted to them that while there is no halakhic problem with their wish, they would not allow them to perform the change because of political and social concerns.

7. For feminist perspectives on the traditional wedding ritual, and specifically on the legal and cultural implications of *kiddushin* as an act of acquisition, see Judith Wegner, *Chattel or Person? The Status of Women in the Mishnah* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988); Orit Kamir, *Feminism, Rights, and Law* (Tel Aviv: Ministry of Defense Press, 2002), 137–51 [in Hebrew]; Susan Aranoff, "Two Views of Marriage — Two Views of Women: Reconsidering *Tav Lemetav Tan du Milemetav Armelu*," *Nashim: A Journal of Jewish Women's Studies and Gender Issues* 3 (2000): 199; Susan Okin, "Marriage, Divorce, and the Politics of Family Life," in *Marriage, Liberty, and Equality: Shall the Three Walk Together*, ed. Tova Cohen (Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 2000): 7–26; Rachel Adler, *Engendering Judaism: An Inclusive Theology and Ethics* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society: 1998), 169–208; Susan S. Sered, Romi Kaplan, and Samuel Cooper, "Talking about Miqveh Parties, or: Discourses of Gender, Hierarchy and Social Control," in *Women and Water: Menstruation in Jewish Life and Law*, ed. Rahel R. Wasserfall (Hanover: University Press of New England: 1999): 139–65.

8. An *agunah* is a woman whose husband has disappeared or is otherwise unable to give his wife a *get*. A *mesurevet get* is a woman whose husband abuses the power given to him by the halakhah and refuses to grant her a *get*.

9. Kamir, *Feminism, Rights, and Law*, 142–46.

10. See Irit Koren, "In a Bride's Voice: Religious Women Challenge the Wedding Ritual," *Nashim: A Journal of Jewish Women's Studies and Gender Issues* 10 (2005): 29. In this article I also describe in depth the ways these women interpret and change different elements of their wedding ritual.

11. The Hebrew text of the prenuptial agreement can be found on the following website: http://www.youngisraelrabbis.org.il/texts/heskem-mavo%203.05.pdf (last entered May 3, 2010). This prenuptial was created by Rabbi Elyashiv Knohl, Rabbi David Ben Zazon, and the rabbinical court advocate Rachel Levmore, with the cooperation of other lawyers, rabbinical court advocates, and women organizations such as Kolech (the Orthodox feminist alliance). In addition there are six other prenuptials that have been presented as well. To learn more about them, see Ruth Halperin-Kadari, *Prenuptial Agreements* (Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, Rackman Center for the Advancement of Women's Justice, and the Center for Justice for Women, 2008). However, as far as I know, the "Agreement for Mutual Respect" is the most popular agreement in Israel. This is perhaps because it was advocated by Kolech, which has been becoming more and more powerful and vocal in the modern religious society in the last decade.

12. According to halakhah, for a Jewish couple to get divorced, the man must give the woman a *get* (writ of divorce) of his own free will, and she must accept it.

However, the prenuptial agreement represents an attempt to balance the unequal power relations between the couple and to change the halakhic reality in which only a husband has the legal right to decide whether to grant a *get*. These legal agreements came about because of the difficulties and the harsh confrontations that *agunot* and *mesuravot get* have faced in the rabbinical courts. According to the Israel Women's Network and the women's organization Mavoi Satum, there are as many as several thousand *mesuravot get* in Israel, in addition to some thirty *agunot* in Israel alone. See "Get FAQ," Mavoi Satum, accessed September 21, 2011, http://www.mavoisatum.org/page81.html?.

13. Susan Starr Sered, "Religiously Doing Gender: The Good Woman and the Bad Woman in Israeli Ritual Discourse," *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 13:2 (2001): 156.

14. Susan Sered, "Women and Religious Change in Israel: Rebellion and Revolution," *Sociology and Religion* 58:1 (1997): 1–2.

15. Ibid.

16. Sered, "Religiously Doing Gender," 160.

17. Ibid.

18. Elliot Aronson, "The Theory of Cognitive Dissonance: A Current Perspective," in *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, vol. 4, ed. Leonard Berkowitz (New York: Academic Press, 1969), 1–34.

19. See Leon Festinger, *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance* (Stanford: Stanford University Press: 1962), 1–31; Joel Cooper, *Cognitive Dissonance: Fifty Years of a Classic Theory* (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2007), 2–3.

20. Elizabeth Weiss Ozorak, "The Power, but Not the Glory: How Women Empower Themselves through Religion," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 35:1 (1996): 17–18.

21. Tehila is referring here to the following article: Tamar Ross and Yehuda Gellman, "The Impact of Feminism on Jewish Orthodox Theology," *Multiculturalism in a Democratic and Jewish State*, 443–464 (Menachem Mautner, Avi Sagi and Ronen Shamir eds. Ramot Press Jerusalem, 1997) (in Hebrew).

22. In Jewish history there are few examples of knowledgeable women who knew Torah, but this was the exception, and these women were perceived as deviant from the norm.

23. Amos Funkenstein and Adin Steinsaltz, *The Sociology of Illiteracy* (Moscow: Ministry of Security Press, 1997) (in Russian).

24. Ellen M. Umansky, "Feminism and the Reevaluation of Women's Roles," in *Women, Religion, and Social Change*, ed. Yvonna Yazbeck Haddad and Ellison Banks Findly (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1985), 492.

25. Tamar El-Or wrote two important works on religious women's education and literacy. The first deals with ultra-Orthodox women, and the second deals with Modern Orthodox women, who are closer to the constituency I researched. To learn more, see Tamar El-Or, *Educated and Ignorant: On Ultra-Orthodox Women and Their World* (Hebrew title: *Maskilot Uvurot: Me-Olaman shel Nashim Harediyot*) (Tel Aviv: Am Oved Publishers, 1992) (in English, Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1994), 94–95; Tamar El-Or, *Next Year I Will Know More: Literacy and Identity among Young Orthodox Women in Israel*, trans. Haim Watzman (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2002), 29–32.

26. See Margart Bryant, *The Unexpected Revolution* (London: University of London Institute of Education, 1979); Anne Scott-Firor, *Making The Invisible Woman Visible* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984); Linda Kerber, *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980).

27. The ability of these women to appropriate the religious knowledge for themselves is particularly impressive due to the fact that women in the five largest religions (Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism) were excluded from formal religious knowledge from the moment that this knowledge became sacred. In all these religions there was a split created between the private sphere, to which women were limited, and the public sphere, which was tied to power and authority. Although some reforms have been made in different streams of these religions, still most of the religious knowledge and education are exclusively for men. See Ursula King, "World Religions, Women and Education," *Comparative Education* 23:1 (1987): 35, 47.

28. It is amazing to see the amount of materials that comes up when one googles "religious single women." These materials include rabbinic responses, forums, and documentary films that portray this phenomenon. This amount of material can testify to how much this subject has become a painful and loaded issue in the religious society.

29. To learn more about the ways the experience of singlehood in these neighborhoods influence and form the identity of these religious modern women, see Chagit Achituv, "The Challenge of Singlehood: Does Defining the Phenomenon of Singlehood as a 'Problem' Answer a Social Need?" *Deot* 17 (2003): 28 [in Hebrew]; and Cheftzi Shtol, "'And Even Though It Is Delayed He Will Come . . .': The Experience of Singlehood within Religious Modern Women," in *To Be a Jewish Woman: Proceedings of the First International Conference on Women and Their Judaism*, ed. Margalit Shilo (Jerusalem: Urim, 2001), 214–27 [in Hebrew].

30. Debra Renee Kaufman, *Rachel's Daughters: Newly Orthodox Jewish Women* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1991), 17, 21–22.

31. The relationship between the ability to live in a complex world that entails both sets of values and one's age can be demonstrated by the phenomenon of secular women who choose to enter the religious Orthodox world. In research about women who became religious (*ba'alot teshuvah*) it was found that most of the women who began their journey to the Orthodox world (64 percent) were in their *late teens or in their early twenties.* The women claimed that the reason they chose to embrace the Orthodox movement rather than more liberal forms of Judaism was exactly because Orthodoxy represented for them a defined authority that is not relational to modern realities. Orthodoxy attracted these women specifically because it presented itself with defined moral values and with a supposedly *one and only truth of existence.* Thus the attraction to Orthodoxy was due to the fact that it does not try to balance both worlds. See Kaufman, *Rachel's Daughters.*

32. Laurie A. Rhodebeck, "The Structure of Men's and Women's Feminist Orientations: Feminist Identity and Feminist Opinion," *Gender and Society* 10:4 (1996): 386.

33. Judith M. Gerson and Kathy Peiss, "Boundaries, Negotiation, Consciousness: Reconceptualizing Gender Relations," *Social Problems* 32:4 (1985): 317, 326. To learn more about feminist consciousness or gender consciousness, see also Patricia Gurin, "Women's Gender Consciousness," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 49 (1985): 143; Patricia Gurin and Hazel Markus, "Cognitive Consequences of Gender Identity," in *The Social Identity of Women*, ed. Suzanne Skevington and Deborah Baker (London: Sage Publications, 1989), 152–72; Patricia Gurin and Aloen Townsend, "Properties of Gender Identity and Their Implications for Gender Consciousness," *British Journal of Social Psychology* 25 (1986): 139.

34. Rhodebeck, "The Structure of Men's and Women's Feminist Orientations," 387.

35. Alyssa, N. Zucker, "Disavowing Social Identities: What It Means When Women Say, 'I'm Not a Feminist But . . . ,'" *Psychology of Women Quarterly* 28 (2004): 423, 431–32.

36. Ozorak, "The Power but Not the Glory," 24.

37. Arlie Russell Hochschild, "Ideology and Emotion Management: A Perspective and Path for Future Research," in *Research Agendas in the Sociology of Emotions*, ed. Theodore D. Kemper (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990): 121–22.

38. Ibid., 163.

39. Orly Benjamin, "The Power of Unsilencing: Between Silence and

Negotiation in Heterosexual Relationship," *Journal for the Theory of Social Behavior* 33:1 (1993).

40. Ariella Friedman, *Annie Oakley Won Twice: Intimacy and Power in Female Identity* (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 2001) (1996) [In Hebrew].

41. See Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982); and Hochschild, "Ideology and Emotion Management." While some claim that this is an essentialist view, I understand Gilligan and Hochschild not to be essentialists but rather to focus on the social constructions that make women perceive themselves and act in certain ways.

42. Harriet Lerner, *The Dance of Anger: A Woman's Guide to Changing the Patterns of Intimate Relationships* (New York: Harper & Row, 1985), 2.

43. Ibid.

44. Ibid., 1–3.

45. Benjamin, "The Power of Unsilencing," 15.

46. Hochschild, "Ideology and Emotion Management," 169.

47. El-Or, *Next Year I Will Know More*, 246–47.

48. Sered, "Women and Religious Change in Israel," 160.