

Dr. Wolowelsky, Associate Editor of *Tradition*, is Dean of the Faculty at the Yeshivah of Flatbush, Brooklyn, NY

“WITH YOUR PERMISSION”: ZIMMUN IN CYBER-HALAKHA

In my introduction to *Women and the Study of Torah*, I wrote:

I wish also to express a personal *hakkarat ha-tov* to Rabbi Walter Wurzburger, Editor Emeritus of *Tradition*. It was close to three decades ago that he invited me, then a young person first entering the field of Jewish education, to join the editorial board of *Tradition*, an invitation which eventually led to my becoming an associate editor of the journal. His confidence in me then constantly reminds me now to actively involve and empower young people in all areas of community service. I hope that I and all others with whom he comes into contact will continue to benefit from his personal integrity, wide-ranging scholarship, and insightful wisdom for many years to come.¹

Alas, it was not for “many years to come” that Dr. Wurzburger was with us. But even in his untimely death he reinforced another lesson—the importance of expressing *hakkarat ha-tov* in a timely fashion. I am happy to repeat these words in a memorial volume; I am thankful that R. Wurzburger was able to read them when he was still alive.

Soon after joining *Tradition's* editorial board, I published in these pages a discussion on the issue of women's involvement in *zimmun*, the first of an eventual series of discussions on the evolving religious practice of women within the Orthodox community.² I would here like to return to that topic from a slightly different perspective.

We need not belabor here the impact that the Internet has had on communications. Suddenly, anyone can get an answer to any question under the sun with a few clicks of a mouse. Unfortunately, there is no quality control on the answers. Listening in on some discussion lists can be a painful experience, as people with little or no expertise in a subject offer self-assured and authoritative-sounding decisions on really serious matters.

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It is interesting, then, to find an Internet service that provides direct access to *talmidei hakhamim* who are ready to answer whoever asks. Until now, direct access to a world-class *posek* was more or less limited to colleagues who posed serious questions or to students in their yeshivot who asked more casual questions in more informal settings. In either case, the respondent knew the person asking the question and the social situation from within which it was asked. Now individuals from a wide range of backgrounds have direct Internet access to such first-class *posekim* and we can eavesdrop on these discussions.

I would here like to look at an exchange with R. Yaakov Ariel on the issue of *zimmun* and women.³ R. Ariel is the Chief Rabbi of Ramat Gan, author of *Responsa Be-Oholah shel Tora*, and one of the main rabbinic authorities of Tzohar, the rabbinic group that has created a real *kiddush Hashem* in reaching out to the secular community and helping them navigate the wedding process, which in Israel is controlled by the official rabbinate, too many of whose officials are insensitive to the needs of the secular community. He was acknowledged as one of the most qualified candidates for the last elections for the Chief Rabbinate and is affiliated with the Merkaz ha-Rav community of religious Zionists.

Q1: If it offends my mother that I do not ask for her permission to say the *zimmun*, inasmuch as she has labored to prepare the meal, must I therefore include her?

A1: Ask for her permission separately before the *zimmun*, but not as part of the *zimmun*, as she is not obligated in the *zimmun* (*eina mehuyyevet ba-zimmun*) and there is no logic to ask her permission in a matter that does not include her.

R. Ariel's unqualified comment that the mother is not obligated in the *zimmun* is striking. There are, of course, differences of opinions regarding women's obligation in *birkhat ha-zimmun*. There are some authorities, such as the Rosh and the Gra who maintain that three women who eat together are obligated to form a *zimmun*, just as three men who eat together are. However, the normative position, as recorded in the *Shulhan Arukh*, is that three women *may* form a *zimmun* if they want to, but are *not* obligated to do so.⁴

To be sure, the permissibility to do something does not always translate into its actually being done. *Arukh ha-Shulhan*, for example, notes that "we have never seen women exercise this option," and such a note might be construed as expression of disfavor for exercising such an

option.⁵ But it seems that this interpretation is hardly compelling. The Gemara (*Arakhin* 3a) says that, “all [including women] are obligated in the *zimmun*.” However, “the Sages did not want to impose on them [the women] the obligation to say *birkat ha-zimmun* when they are by themselves because there are not many [women] who are proficient enough in *birkat ha-zimmun*.”⁶ Such ignorance had to be accommodated, to be sure, but surely it was not meant to be idealized, certainly not in an age when women enjoy unprecedented higher education in Torah and are proficient not only in *birkat ha-zimmun* but in wide areas of the Written and Oral Torah.

Indeed, contemporary *posekim* do not enshrine such non-participation. *Halikhot Beitah* (12:6) presents the option as normative and adds the opinion of R. Shelomo Zalman Auerbach that when three women eat with one or two men, not only should one of the women lead the *zimmun*, but the men should respond.⁷ *Halikhot Bat Yisrael* similarly presents the option as normative and adds in a footnote that *Ben Ish Hai* wrote, that “it is proper that everyone should teach the women of their households to say the *zimmun* when they eat together.”⁸ *Otsar Dinim la-Isha ve-la-Bat* similarly presents *Shulhan Arukh*’s position as normative, but notes *Arukh ha-Shulhan*’s observation that women have not exercised this option.⁹

(The Artscroll women’s *siddur* summarizes all this by simply noting, “The prevalent practice is that a woman does not lead the *zimmun* even if only women are present” without even mentioning the explicit ruling of the *Shulhan Arukh* or contemporary *posekim* like R. Auerbach.¹⁰ Alas, this approach dominates many contemporary discussions. For example, one can read through the various recent books on the Laws of Mourning without seeing any reference to the well established halakhic option endorsed by leading *gedolei Tora* that women may say kaddish, even in the synagogue.)

Now, all this would seem to support R. Ariel’s statement that women are not obligated in the *zimmun*—that is, if not for the fact that the *Shulhan Arukh* goes on to say explicitly that when the women eat with three or more men, they are also obligated in the *zimmun* with the men!¹¹ True, many women who eat with men forgo such participation. It is worth noting the comments of R. Moshe Feinstein on that phenomenon:

Regarding women who ate at the table with three men, they are obligated to answer the *birkat ha-zimmun*, as it says explicitly in [*Shulhan*

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Arukh] 199:7. But on weekdays, when there is in most places no set meal at which all eat together and she is preoccupied with preparing the meal and bringing it to the table for everyone, her intention is not to sit and eat together [with them]. And this is certainly the case when she has small children who are distracting her, and she does not have the leisure to sit down for a meal [*likbo'a akhilatah*] even by herself, let alone with others. [Especially on] weekdays, then she has no part whatsoever in their sitting to eat. Because of that, even if at times she has the time to establish a set meal, the women did not accustom themselves to answer the *zimmun*. But the husband is certainly obligated to call her when she is indeed obligated and not allow the people to begin before she comes to the table to say [*birkat ha-mazon*] together with the *zimmun*—or at least she should answer “*Barukh she-akhalnu*” and remain until the end of the “*zan*” blessing. And on Shabbat, when all eat together and no one is hurrying to say [*birkat ha-mazon*], one must invite her to say [*birkat ha-mazon*] together with the *zimmun*. And it is improper to justify the women’s [lack of participation, by saying], ‘What can they do if the men said the *zimmun* without waiting for them?’ Men, who on Shabbat hurry to say the *zimmun* without waiting for the women and do not call them—it is certainly forbidden [to do so] on Shabbat and at many times on weekdays too.¹²

“Eating with the men,” he explains, is not simply a factual matter; it has a psychological component as well. As a practical matter, women who are constantly getting up and down from the table are not really “eating with the men” and therefore are exempt from saying the *zimmun*. As a result, some of them have mistakenly come to the conclusion that they are always exempt. But there is no such exemption, he emphasizes, when they are actually part of the meal, as on Shabbat and at many times on weekdays too.

Of course, there is nothing in the question at hand that suggests that R. Ariel’s questioner is referring to one of those situations when the mother is exempt—and even if it were, it would be necessary to establish that before issuing a *pesak* that could be misinterpreted as abrogating the specific obligation imposed by the *Shulhan Arukh*. But that is not the most confusing part of the quick responsum.

What could R. Ariel have meant by saying, “Ask for her permission separately before the *zimmun*, but not as part of the *zimmun*.” Shall he say, “*Bi-reshuteikh, Ima, nevarekh*” and then, “*Rabbotai nevarekh*”? How can it make sense to ask permission of the mother to say the *zimmun* simply because it is asked before the others are asked, when his

position is that “there is no logic to ask her permission in a matter that does not include her”?

Placating the mother rather than asking her permission was clearly the goal. Indeed, such mollifications can assume various forms. Once I heard a young man, fresh back from his year in Israel, change his customary, “*Bi-reshut Avi mori ve-Imi morati, nevarekh,*” to “*Bi-reshut Avi mori u-bi-khvod Imi morati, nevarekh.*” When I questioned him privately about the change, he explained that there was no reason to ask her permission, as she is not part of the *zimmun*. She wants to be mentioned, he went on to say, but she really wasn’t fluent in Hebrew. So he changed the form so as to not ask her permission but still say “*Imi morati,*” a familiar phrase that she would surely catch and thereby be appeased. I thought it ironic that he would use “*bi-khvod*” to exploit her lack of proficiency in Hebrew to make her think that he was acceding to her wishes when he really was not.

In any event, the Internet questioner was not concerned with these fine points. He simply wants to please his mother and Rav Ariel’s suggestion would not work:

Q2: It does not satisfy my mother if I ask her before the *zimmun*. She wants it done as part of the *zimmun*. Is it not right to include her? Indeed, is not the obligation to honor one’s parents more important than the *zimmun*?

A2: There is no obligation to honor one’s parents if it violates the halakha. Explain this to her calmly, or do not lead the *zimmun* at all in her presence so as not to offend her.

The response here is striking, indeed. Asking the mother’s permission is not simply illogical, since she is not obligated in the *zimmun*, but a straightforward violation of halakha! This escalation of rhetoric is not lost on the questioner:

Q3: With continued reference to the response concerning asking permission from one’s mother to say the *zimmun*: I did not understand the problem with saying, “With the permission of my father, my teacher, *avi mori*, and with the permission of my mother, my teacher, *imi morati*. . . .” Why does this run counter to the halakha? After all, one is not really asking permission from her, just as one is not really asking permission from anyone sitting there. (“With permission of the master of the house”—do we not say the *zimmun* even if he objects?) And I do not understand why one should forgo the *zimmun* completely in order not to offend one’s mother.

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A3: I did not say to completely forgo the *zimmun*. Rather, the son should forgo his right to lead the *zimmun*, as the father can lead the *zimmun* in order that the son not enter into gratuitous conflict with his mother.

The Jewish people have accepted a form for the *zimmun*. Even the Maharsha [Rav Shmuel Eliezer ha-Levi], who was named after his mother (Eidel) because she raised him for a life of Torah, presumably (*mistama*) used the standard form and did not change it. The leader of the *zimmun* asks permission from the others who are obligated in the *zimmun* or from the head of the household who honored him with the privilege of leading the *zimmun*. The mother is not obligated in the *zimmun* and so there is no logic in asking permission from her. The mother's request to ask her permission diverges from the accepted form and is an unjustified breach that stems apparently from foreign social pressures whose place is elsewhere, but which should not under any circumstances enter into the framework of *birkat ha-mazon*. If the mother is offended by the fact that the father is mentioned and not she, there is no need to mention the father [either], including the phrase "master of the house, *ba-al ha-bayit*" but using the general form, "My teachers and masters, *morai ve-rabbotai*" in which the mother is included as well. And all will come to their proper place in peace.

We now are moving to a more reasoned explanation of this *pesak*, although a simple examination quickly reveals more serious difficulties. As we observed, the mother is obligated in the *zimmun* when she eats with the men, so there is little logic in the justification that "[t]he leader of the *zimmun* asks permission from the others who are obligated in the *zimmun* . . . [but] The mother is not obligated in the *zimmun* and so there is no logic in asking her permission." Of course, there is no reason to presume—other than postulating it as fact—that the Maharsha did not ask permission from his mother in introducing the *zimmun*. (Actually, it was his mother-in-law, Rebbetzin Eidel Lifschitz of Pozna, the wealthy widow of Rav Moshe Lifschitz, the *rav* of Brisk, who was honored in appreciation of her financial support for his Torah endeavors. After her death, the Maharsha added the name Eidel to his own name and from then on called himself Shmuel Eliezer Eidel.) The Maharsha might have recalled the halakha that she was obligated in the *zimmun* or, recognizing that he was living off her largesse, considered her the head of the household.

It is true, however, that "[t]he leader of the *zimmun* asks permission from the others who are obligated in the *zimmun* or from the head

of the household who honored him with the privilege of leading the *zimmun*.” Each of the two categories has its own logic.

In its original form, the *zimmun* was more than simply an introduction to *birkat ha-mazon*.

There is a strange halakhic institution, the *zimmun*, through which the whole *Birkat ha-Mazon* assumes a new dimension. Saying *Birkat ha-Mazon* with a *zimmun*, if truly understood and implemented, represents communal recital of the blessings: one person says them aloud, and the rest of the company listens quietly and answers “*Amen*”. . . . The idea which this halakhah tried to translate into a ceremony is that of a community formed by the act of eating. The *se’udah* is designed not only to satisfy man’s physical needs but also to take him out of his sheltered seclusion and loneliness and let him join the thou. Eating becomes a cohesive force bringing together people who were shut up in their own small worlds and coalescing them into a community. The Halakhah was aware of the fact that a meal partaken together unites people, fosters friendship, and fashions a company of eaters who, in the long run, may become a community of God seekers and the God-committed.¹³

The people who ate together form a community that is expressed by each of them fulfilling—“being *yotsei*” in current parlance—their obligation in *birkat ha-mazon* through the leader of the *zimmun*. To do that—to “be *motsi* them”—the leader must gain their permission to act on their behalf. But since the women at the table are obligated to participate in this construct by virtue of their being obligated in the *zimmun*, the leader must ask permission from all of them too—and this includes the mother in our case.

The logic of specifically mentioning the head of the household is based on the fact that a guest adds a specific blessing for the host and as such, the head of the household has the right to name whomever he wishes to say that blessing. Practically, this means being named as the leader of the *zimmun*, for in theory, it is only the leader of the *zimmun* who recites all the blessings. This right stems from having “sponsored” the meal, not from being part of the *zimmun*.

Most importantly, this whole discussion would surely sound strange to Sephardim who regularly include such phrases as “*bi-reshut Shabbat Malketa*, with the permission of the Sabbath Queen” on Shabbat, or “*bi-reshut shiv’a ushpizin ila’in kadishin*, with the permission of the seven holy guests” on Sukkot.¹⁴ One is surely not asking permission of those who are part of the *zimmun*, but rather acknowledging an impor-

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tant presence at the table. Indeed, *minhag Yerushalyim* is to add, “*bi-reshut kol ha-mesubin, kol ehad ve-ehad lefi kevodo u-ma’alato*, with the permission of everyone present, each according to their due honor.”¹⁵

R. Ariel’s underlying logic comes through in the final exchange:

Q4: With further reference to his honor’s answers regarding asking permission from a mother for the *zimmun*: I am having trouble fully understanding your position and would further trouble you to explain it to me. I do not understand why the idea that “there is no reason” to ask permission—which I understood to mean that “there is no obligation”—morphed into “an obligation not to” and trumps the biblical obligation to be extremely exacting about the honor of one’s mother. What is the obligation that trumps honoring one’s mother in this case?

A4: How is this mother different from all the generations of mothers who preceded her, who did not demand this honor? Is her status greater than all of these mothers?

This is but a reflection of a goal of change for the sake of change. And in our generation, when there is an attempt on the part of women to breach accepted norms without purpose, there is here a halakhic prohibition.

We learned a bitter lesson from the Reform that began with “innocent” things like using an organ or praying in German, where there was no explicit halakhic prohibition. But the results were disastrous and the Torah giants foresaw this. My advice to this honorable mother is to protect her standing and honor in the many paths that cry out for motherly attention, like charitable and hesed organizations and help for those in need.

Had this position been presented forthrightly, we would have been better positioned to understand R. Ariel’s reaction. But then, we would not have involved ourselves with halakhic arguments but with sociological and historical considerations. I shall briefly mention three of them here without arguing them through.

First, it may not be true that the generations of mothers who preceded her did not demand this honor because they had a different mind set. But perhaps the “*biddush*” is that we are now first hearing these views aired. For example, consider the recollection of R. Baruch ha-Levi Epstein about his aunt Rayna Batya, first wife of the Netziv:

How bitter was my aunt, as she would say from time to time, “that every empty-headed ignorant man, every lowlife who hardly knew the meaning of the words and who would dare not cross her threshold

without first obsequiously and humbly obtaining her permission, would not hesitate to boldly and arrogantly recite to her face the *berakha* ‘*she-lo asani isha.*’” Moreover, upon his recitation of the blessing, she is obliged to answer ‘*Amen.*’ “And who can muster enough strength,” she concluded with great anguish, “to hear this eternal symbol of shame and embarrassment to women.”¹⁶

Indeed, R. Avraham Worms (disciple of the *Sha’agat Arye* who served as *rosh yeshiva*, *dayyan* and *rav* of Metz) had ruled that this *berakha* should not be said aloud in the morning service, as “How can we publicly insult someone [*malbin penei haveru be-rabbim*]!”¹⁷ He did not suggest that, as an alternative, the women put aside a newfound offense to the *berakha*, nor did he suggest that the *berakha* be omitted or changed. He dealt with the reality of hurt feelings within what he considered the bounds of acceptable solutions.

There is no way of resolving to what extent our questioner’s mother is reflecting a new or old (but unstated) sensitivity. But we might well remember the Talmudic anecdote (*Berakhot* 51b) regarding the person who leads the *zimmun* at a meal and then passes around the *kos shel berakha* (the cup of wine over which *birkhat ha-mazon* was recited) to the members of the household as a form of blessing. Once Ulla visited the Babylonian Amora, R. Nahman, who was married to Yalta, the daughter of the *Reish Galuta*. After leading *birkat ha-mazon*, Ulla passed the *kos shel berakha* to R. Nahman, who asked him to send it to Yalta too. He demurred, quoting R. Yohanan, that the Torah says (*Deut* 7:13), “God will bless the issue of your womb,” using the masculine form of “your” instead of the phrase “her womb,” thereby indicating that progeny receives its blessing through the father and not the mother. There was therefore no need to extend the blessing to Yalta herself. When Yalta heard this slight, she was enraged and went to the storage room and smashed four hundred jars of wine. R. Nahman then asked Ulla to send her another cup of wine. He did, along with a message that all wine from that casket is of *berakha*. She retorted, “Gossip comes from the people who wander around the cities [a reference to the fact that Ulla was known for traveling around the cities of Israel], and lice from the rag pickers.”

A second consideration regarding R. Ariel’s response, is that it is far from clear that the mother’s request reflects a change for the sake of change, rather than a reflection of women’s growing educational achievements. We saw that significant *posekim* viewed contemporary

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women's saying the *zimmun* themselves, as something that should not be discouraged. If women now eat regularly with the men and therefore participate in the *zimmun*, from which they had previously often improperly excused themselves, would it not be logical to recognize their presence at the table?

Third, the alleged lesson emerging from the battle against the Reform movement is unconvincing. It is true that Orthodoxy's fight against the organ and praying in German was constructive and farsighted, as was the ideological battle against mixed seating in American "traditional" synagogues. But ideologues also polemicized, for example, against sermons in the vernacular. How many young people were lost to Orthodoxy simply because their rabbis would teach and preach only in Yiddish?! Perhaps that is the better analogy to the bitter fights against women's increased involvement in such matters as the *zimmun* and the permission asked before it is recited. Clearly, a different mindset and a more favorable appreciation of the motivating attitudes of contemporary religious women would have produced a very different answer to what was really an innocuous question.

I believe that the way to make sense of R. Ariel's response lies in understanding the nature of proper *pesak* in contemporary society and the nature of the Internet. R. Hershel Schachter recently outlined an important component of the methodology of *pesak* of the *Rav*, R. Joseph B. Soloveitchik.¹⁸ R. Schachter cited a number of times when the *Rav* seemed to have presented conflicting answers to the same question. For example, once the *Rav* had told R. Melech Schachter that something was forbidden; the students who were present asked why, if the *Rav* thought it was forbidden, had he just told someone else that it was permitted. The *Rav* responded that the first person was not his student and was not really interested in his personal opinion. He was really asking if there was a permissive ruling. So he withheld his own opinion that it was forbidden. But R. Schachter had asked because he really wanted the *Rav*'s personal opinion in the matter and would follow it. So the *Rav* told him his opinion.¹⁹

If this sounds strange to some of us, it is because we might not have first-hand interaction with true *talmidei hakhamim*. The slogan "*da'as Torah*" masks the individual dynamics in obtaining *pesak*.²⁰ It is true that the *Rav* was emphatic in granting his students great leeway in selecting among the range of halakhically acceptable positions. But in fact, all responsible *posekim* take a similar attitude, differentiating between a question from a loyal student, the answer to which needs lit-

the explanation or justification, and a more general question, which is asking for an authoritative presentation of the range of acceptable positions. Indeed, anyone reading *teshuvot*—R. Ariel’s included—sees that alternate positions are discussed, even as the bottom line is presented.

If one of R. Ariel’s students, who was from a family that regularly adjusted its halakhic life to his opinions, had asked him, “My mother asked me to add the phrase ‘*bi-reshut Imi Morati*,’” he might have easily and appropriately responded, “Tell her that these types of changes come from a place that she and I see as reflecting non-halakhic values. If just mentioning your father bothers her, I would suggest just saying ‘*bi-reshut morai ve-rabbotai*’ and include everyone.” Nothing more need have been said by either. Indeed, if the student protested rudely, one could understand if R. Ariel would respond dismissingly. But the anonymous questioner here has no such apparent relationship to R. Ariel. A proper response here required spelling out the real range of halakhic options.

The Internet draws one in to a false sense of intimacy. People allow themselves to write quickly—as if the screen in front of them was the person to whom they were talking. That anonymous person on the screen somehow becomes an acquaintance. It’s a danger faced by young teenagers drawn into a false sense of security when they join discussion groups and, it would seem, by adults quickly answering the type of questions they were used to hearing informally from their loyal students.

A very different approach is to be found among a different set of “new-age” technology-driven responsa. Machon Eretz Hemda was established to provide authoritative and well-grounded answers to questions posed by rabbis around the world who did not have quick access to authoritative *posekim*. Originally, they communicated by fax and now via the Internet, but their responses are not immediate and reflect considered analyses of both sides of the issues at hand.²¹ Their program involves training future *posekim*, as well as providing authoritative *pesak*. The answers are prepared by a group of *kollel* students and are then reviewed and approved by the *rashei kollel*, who sign them. Originally, R. Shaul Yisraeli countersigned each one, giving them authority far beyond that of the *rashei kollel*. After his death, the *teshuvot* are now reviewed by the members of the Eretz Hemda Rabbinic Advisory Board, which consists of R. Zalman Nechemia Goldberg and R. Nachum Eliezer Rabinowitz (and R. Yisrael Rosen for technical matters).

Responding to a question on whether the guests eating at the home of a widow must add the phrase “*bi-reshut ba’alat ha-bayit*” in intro-

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ducing the *zimmun*, they rule that from the point of view of the law and civility (*min ha-nimus u-mi-meila min ha-din*) they should do so.²² In a subsequent, but as yet unpublished, reaffirmation of their position, they write:

The right of the person who provides the meal to determine who leads the *zimmun* does not stem from his being part of the *zimmun* group but rather from his right to determine who will be the person who blesses him through the *birkat ha-orei'ah*. Therefore it makes no difference if he ate with them or not, whether it is a man or a woman, or whether he is an adult or a minor. . . . Out of a sense of humility, *midat ha-anava*, it is customary to say, “*Bi-reshut morai ve-rabbotai*” even in those circumstances when there is no obligation to ask permission from anyone.²³

How good it is to read a *pesak* in this matter that bases itself on *anava*, *nimus*, and *din*. And how appropriate it is to end an article written in memory of R. Wurzburger noting some of the qualities that so marked his life: humility, civil politeness, and a dedication to the letter of the law. May his memory be blessed.

NOTES

1. Joel B. Wolowelsky, ed., *Women and the Study of Torah* (Ktav and Rabbinical Council of America: 2001), xxi.
2. Joel B. Wolowelsky, “The Eating Fellowship: An Exploration,” *Tradition*, 16:2 (1977), 75-82.
3. <http://www.yeshiva.org.il/ask>, and search for *zimmun* questions asked of R. Ariel. This four-part exchange occurred over a few days of Tishrei 5766 / October 2005.
4. *Shulhan Arukh, Orach Hayyim* 199:7.
5. *Arukh ha-Shulhan* 199:2.
6. *Mishna Berura* 199 n. 16.
7. R. David Auerbach, *Halikhot Beitah* (Jerusalem: 5743 / 1983), 12:8, 94 n. 14.
8. R. Yitzhak Ya'akov Fuchs, *Halikhot Bat Yisrael* (Jerusalem: 5744 / 1983), 3:14, 62 n. 34.
9. R. Yitzhak Yosef, *Otsar Dinim la-Isha ve-la-Bat* (Jerusalem: 5749 / 1989), 6:6, 51 n. 8.
10. *Obel Sarah Women's Siddur* (Mesorah Heritage Foundation: 2005), 158, noting *Arukh ha-Shulhan*.
11. *Shulhan Arukh, Orach Hayyim* 199:7.

12. R. Moshe Feinstein, *Iggerot Moshe, Orab Hayyim* 5:9 (10)
13. R. Joseph B. Soloveitchik, "An Exalted Evening: The Seder Night," in *Festival of Freedom*, ed. Joel B. Wolowelsky and Reuven Ziegler (Ktav: 2006), 21.
14. R. Yosef Hayyim, *Ben Ish Hai, Parashat Korah*.
15. R. Yitzhak Yosef, *Yalkut Yosef*, vol. 3, 192:2, 367 n. 2.
16. R. Baruch Epstein [Epstein], *Mekor Barukh* (Vilna: Rom, 1928), part four, ch. 46, sec. 3, p. 981. This whole paragraph was left out in the Artscroll English translation of R. Epstein's book, *My Uncle the Netziv*, trans. Moshe Dombey (Jerusalem: Artscroll / Mesorah: 1988).
17. R. Avraham Worms, *Me'orei Or*, vol. 4 (*Be'er Sheva*) (Metz: 1831), 20.
18. R. Tzvi (Hershel) Schachter, "*Mi-Peninei Rabbeinu: Kuntrus be-Inyanei Pesak Halakha*," *Beit Yitshak* 38 (New York: Yeshiva University, 2006), 21-28.
19. *Mi-Peninei Rabbeinu*, 26.
20. Another anecdote illustrates the *Rav*'s distance from that mindset. A student had asked the *Rav* his opinion on a political matter, and after hearing it said, "So the *Rav*'s *da'as Torah* on the matter is such-and-such." The *Rav* quickly responded, "I did not say *da'as Torah*. I gave you my opinion and everyone should decide for themselves." *Rav* Schachter comments: "People are accustomed to use the phrase '*da'as Torah*' as meaning a definitive ruling with which one cannot debate or disagree. But this was not the *Rav*'s position, as is widely known to all." *Mi-Peninei Rabbeinu*, 24.
21. <http://www.erezhemdah.org>.
22. R. Moshe Ehrenreich and R. Yosef Carmel, *Shu"t be-Mar'e ha-Bazak*, vol. 5 (Eretz Hemda Institute: 2003), no. 9, p. 42.
23. R. Moshe Ehrenreich and R. Yosef Carmel, Eretz Hemda Institute, Responsum 8636, Tevet 5766 / January 2006. I am grateful to Rabbi Gidon Rothstein for sharing this responsum with me.