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*really* Sephardic. In speech, as in dress, they often absorb the manners of Eastern Europe as the proper ones. Two levels of discourse, sacred and secular, demand two kinds of pronunciation.

So there you are, boys. You ask a simple question and you get a long and muddled answer. (Age, don't you know.) I will leave it to *halakhic* handbooks to sort it all into neat categories. In the meantime, you should now have some notion of what your parents have been up to, though we obviously didn't make it clear, even perhaps to ourselves. And we will watch with interest how your Hebrew accent—and that of your own children, when you have them—evolves. †

## By their baby—sitters ye shall know them

Joseph C. Kaplan

Modern Orthodoxy, while not an oxymoron, is a study in tension. We who are modern Orthodox Jews valiantly attempt to keep our balance while straddling two worlds—the world of the *yeshiva* and of the university, of the *beit medrash* and of the library, of the *Shulkhan Arukh* and Rav Moshe Feinstein and of Shakespeare, Keats and Updike, of *tzniut* and of fashion, of *kashrut* and of nouvelle cuisine, of religious authority, observance and tradition and of democratic liberalism and individual rights and freedoms. We set as one of our goals the desire to appreciate, experience, learn from and live and actively participate in both of these worlds.

Those who have changed the rallying cry of our movement from modern to centrist Orthodox have therefore missed at least one element of our essence, and overlooked some of our complexity. As pointed out by my beloved mentor, Rabbi Emanuel Rackman: “On some issues, we [modern Orthodox Jews] are not in the center but are extremists—such as the centrality of ethics in religious observance and the importance of improving the legal status of the Jewish woman.”

### An Orthodox Odd Couple

And so, as Orthodox Jews devoted to the *halakhic* system, as modern, educated and sophisticated 20th century women and men, as extremist, centrist and

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JOSEPH C. KAPLAN, a lawyer by profession, still has warm memories of his years as a *Sh'ma* Fellow.

moderate thinkers and doers, and as confused and sincere searchers for the right way, we continue our unending battle to ease somewhat the tension that gnaws at the core of our being.

Blu Greenberg, the noted lecturer and writer, has been a leading spokesperson for modern Orthodoxy during the past two decades, and has fought on behalf of its hoped-for extremism in the goal of “improving the legal status of the Jewish woman.” She has raised critical and difficult questions, and suggested daring and innovative solutions. By so doing, she has influenced many, touched more, and, to be completely honest, antagonized perhaps yet more. She has attempted to push certain *halakhic* mandates to their outer limits in order to preserve other *halakhic* mandates. She has challenged our complacencies, upset our stabilities and questioned our priorities—but always in a loving, caring, sweet and gentle manner.

Rabbi Yehoshua Leiman is a well-known teacher of *tanakh* and lecturer in the New York metropolitan area. He is an imposing figure with a long graying beard, an equally long and austere *bekeshe* and a plain white shirt with no tie—the outward appearance of what is currently called ultra Orthodox Judaism. Yet Rabbi Leiman often teaches and lectures to modern Orthodox Jews in impeccable English and with a soft sweet voice filled with love of God, Torah and the Jewish people—all of the Jewish people.

### Exhilaration And Angst

Why this jumble of disparate ideas, thoughts and personalities? What is, to use the talmudic phrase, the *tzad hashaveh beyneyhem*—their common denominator? It begins with personal history. Blu Greenberg, Yehoshua Leiman and I all grew up in Far Rockaway, a well-known bastion of Orthodox Judaism in the New York metropolitan area. And as we grew up, both of them baby-sat for me. I always knew this about Blu, and over the years have shared many a smile with her about our secret “relationship,” especially when she would try to lop five or ten years off my age. I did not, however, recall this about Rabbi Leiman until a few years ago, when he was a weekend scholar-in-residence in my community. When we warmly greeted each other at the *kiddush* following the service, and took a few minutes to both reminisce and catch up, he reminded me of this fact.

I told this to my wife at our Shabbat lunch table, and her reaction was immediate and incisive: “Wasn't Blu Greenberg also your baby-sitter? What an interesting couple.” In fact, they make a fascinating odd couple—so very different in various modes of approach and philoso-

phy, and yet so very alike in certain shared basic values and beliefs. The Far Rockaway in which we grew up was a tolerant community, with little of the inter-group enmity that is all too pervasive in today's more acrimonious Jewish world. It's therefore not surprising that such a community could beget two such gentle yet committed people, who, though representing vastly different voices of Orthodoxy, embed the love of *klal Yisrael* in the center of their own beliefs.

These two compelling personalities who touched my life, still affect me on a personal level. I feel I am the third point in their triangle, and am therefore intrigued by the notion—perhaps only metaphorical—that it is the tension between the Blu Greenberg and the Yehoshua Leiman in my background, and the continuing haunting tension between what they represent, that make my being a modern Orthodox Jew so exhilarating and yet, at one and the same time, so fraught with self-doubt and angst. The intellectual honesty and openness to modernity and its challenges exemplified in Blu Greenberg's commitment to *halakhah* speaks to my soul; but Yehoshua Leiman's unflinching devotion to tradition and unyielding resistance to the baseness of our modern age has for me a compelling logic of its own. As I continue my struggle to live my life as an Orthodox Jew in this modern world, I appreciate and acknowledge that I would not be where I am had our paths never crossed. †

## But others say about...

### Jewish Communal Leadership

I was disappointed in the responses to case number 3 in "Ethics in Jewish communal leadership" (*Sh'ma* 27/523). If we assume, as did all three respondents, that there was a singular victim, who was satisfied by the offending rabbi's departure, then I might not have felt compelled to write. However, there are situations where there are multiple victims, and they are unaware of one another. Furthermore, most congregants do not know the procedures for registering such a complaint and are often intimidated by the daunting prospect of "getting the rabbi in trouble."

In fact, such behavior on the part of the rabbi (or cantor) is a serious breach of professional ethics, not to mention a grievous violation of the trust implied in the

## Ta sh'ma

We invite you to send us your favorite text and comment. Submissions should not exceed 200 words. Be sure to include proper citation of sources. Hebrew will appear in transliteration.

### ■ James R. Michaels

*May it be your will, O Lord my God and God of my ancestors, to save me this day and every day from arrogance in myself and insolence in others. Protect me from an evil stranger, and from a friend or neighbor who is vicious and mean-spirited. Preserve me from misfortune and from the power to destroy, from harsh judgments and ruthless opponents, whether they be Jews or non-Jews.*

FROM THE START OF THE DAILY MORNING PRAYERS

Throughout history, Jews certainly had reason to pray for protection. Potential enemies were always nearby. But this prayer reminds us that perhaps the greatest dangers are neither physical nor external. Anyone—our closest friend, someone we *daven* with, the neighbor across the street—has the power to hurt us with a careless word or thought. Those hurts can be more devastating than any physical injury. And once we remember what others can do to us, we should realize what we can do to others. Thus, implicit in the request is a warning. Guard yourself!

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relationship between clergy and congregant. Some rabbinical associations have ethics procedures that outline how such a complaint might be processed. None of the respondents even considered this as an option.

While many cases of this violation of ethics and trust are indeed single episodes, often related to inexperience or naivete on the part of the rabbi/cantor, other cases are a deliberate exploitation of the trusting relationship with congregants, and can permanently damage the ability of the victim(s) to find spiritual comfort in a synagogue setting. When a president considers doing the right thing for a congregation, I respect the need to take the laws of *lashon hara* (the risk of defamation) into consideration.

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On the other hand, *pikuach nefesh* (protecting lives) might compel me to fully investigate all of the allegations in a sensitive and confidential manner (perhaps through a professional ethics process), and to share founded information with the congregation. A report from clergy who serve in congregations in the aftermath of "secretive departures" indicate that there is a great deal of work to be done in healing the congregation that might have been alleviated with the timely and sensitive sharing of information. *Teshuvah* on the part of the rabbi might include a recognition of the harm done to the *entire* congregation, and as such, an apology to the congregation in the form of disclosure is not out of the question.

Our synagogues are not alone in struggling with this most difficult ethical issue. There are several excellent resources on the subject. One of the nationally recognized sources is the Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence in Seattle. They can be contacted by calling (208) 634-1903, or by writing to CPSDV, 936 N 34th Street, Suite 200, Seattle, WA 98103. I am one of several rabbis who serve on their Bi-national Advisory Board.

Rabbi Julie R. Spitzer  
New York NY

### Managed Care

I would like to respond to Arnold and Sandra Gold's "Where is the care in managed care?" (*Sh'ma* 27/524). The Golds suggest that managed care is lacking in ethical grounding since it emphasizes cost-saving (and profit-making) at the expense of caring, humane medicine. However, their argument rings hollow. Their primary objection to managed care, that it entails a conflict of interest on the part of managed care companies, ignores the fact that under traditional indemnity health insurance, physicians were faced with a conflict of interest: namely, the more care they provided, the more money they earned. As utilization of hospitals, elective surgery, and specialist consultations have declined under managed care, with no measurable rise in national

morbidity rates, one can only assume that the old system prompted physicians and hospitals, categorically, to over-provide, suggesting a significant breach of medical ethics.

Gold and Gold cite anecdotes (dead newborns and amputated limbs) to persuade us that managed care is jeopardizing the quality of our health care, but statistics do not bear them out. No single group of patients has displayed decreased life expectancy or sickness outcome measures under managed care, and a few (particularly Medicaid enrollees) have actually shown improved health measures. While managed care is inconvenient, frustrating, limiting, and sometimes impersonal, it has not been shown to be hazardous to anyone's health.

The question, then, is what value do Americans place on convenience, compassion, and meaningful doctor/patient relationships, the loss of which the Golds find so troubling? Apparently not much. In situations in which employees are given a choice between traditional indemnity plans (with higher premiums and deductibles) and managed care plans (with lower premiums and negligible deductibles), they choose the managed care option almost exclusively. In effect, Americans are saying that while they would all like to have doctors make bedside visits to dying loved ones, few are willing to pay for it if there is little potential medical benefit. The Golds may decry this seemingly callous financial decision, but it is not their decision to make.

Jonathan Engle  
South Orange NJ

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## Thanks!

Profound thanks to all of you who have so graciously given to *Sh'ma* this year. You make it all possible. And to all our other friends—it may be too late for a Hanukkah gift; it may be too late for a 1996 deduction; but, it is never too late to give.

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