

BS"D

Our Key to Salvation: Standing With Righteous Individuals Who Stand With HaShem - Against His Enemies

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By Binyomin Feinberg

As we approach the Days of Awe, it's appropriate to reflect on the plight of those righteous women languishing in Israeli military prison to avoid conscription into the immoral, exploitative Army. Furthermore, we must also consider the ongoing travails of all the many, many other girls and women who regularly endure intimidation and threats from Israeli military draft office, from the court system, and also suffer from the systemic corruption enabling the wholesale abandonment of innocent girls - in their stand against the military draft - for their Faith, morality, and personal purity. But first, a general background review is in order.

A. A Refresher:

1. Ever since the early days of the State of Israel, the Israeli Army has been - almost unbelievably - regularly drafting girls - Jewish girls, and even some non-Jewish ones.
2. Leading Rabbis from across the spectrum held and hold that it's prohibited for any girl to enlist in the Army. How much more so it is prohibited to FORCE girls (of any faith) to enlist, even if they're totally non-religious.
3. Moreover, the Brisker Rov ZT"L was quoted by Rav Aharon Soloveichik ZT"L (in sefer "Yeled Sha'ashuim") to be opposed to the drafting of non-religious girls even more strongly than he

was opposed to drafting religious ones, due of the escalated spiritual threats to the former over the latter. Such spiritual dangers are endemic to the military milieu, and have manifested in the Israeli Army in the form of ongoing immorality, exploitation, and downright abuse.

4. This is the same Brisker Rov who held that if, G-d forbid, we would need to choose, it would be preferable to close down all the Yeshivos rather than allow even one girl to be drafted at all.*

[* This insight from the Brisker Rov may inspire introspection among some more reflective individuals, especially now, in the midst of the second Coronavirus shutdown in Israel. (Perhaps community activists and fiefdoms prioritizing government funding for their institutions - to the exclusion of leveraging increased Orthodox political power to abolish the female draft - isn't countenanced well in Heaven -- especially while dozens of girls are languishing in "Jewish" military prisons - often in acutely oppressive conditions.)]

5. In the wake of international outcries by religious Jews across the spectrum - in decades past - religious girls, the dominant antireligious elements allowed concession provisions. This compromise mandated providing automatic military service exemptions to religious girls. Thus, until recent years, religious girls had been routinely exempt.

6. Tragically, the drafting of other girls had continued, in the state describing itself as somehow associated with Judaism - to which drafting girls or women is absolute anathema. It must be emphasized that the drafting of girls - even only non-religious girls - was always seen as an ongoing travesty. By no stretch of the imagination was it EVER anything with which any Jew could possibly make peace.

7. Many religious and traditional Israeli girls have, in recent years, been subjected to increasing attempts to draft them into the Army.

8. In some cases, the Army even drafts such girls into mixed units and combat units.

9. Tragically, many traditional and even religious girls have fallen into the Army, recently.

10. Generally, that's the result of the lack of effective outreach to such girls, particularly sefardic girls, especially those coming from a religiously weak background.

11. Many girls have fallen into the Army because of illegal maneuvers and manipulation by the Draft Offices, operating under "Meitav."

12. Chomosaich is an organization providing assistance to any girl who seeks to save herself from the draft, regardless of her religiosity or background.

13. They provide information and help coordinate legal assistance with Israeli attorneys competent in saving these girls from the draft.

14. Chomosaich also provides girls in the exemption process with vital chizuk.

15. Often, another vital need is public awareness. Why? Because intelligent PR is often necessary, to exert pressure often instrumental in rescuing these girls from government intimidation and threats, and even incarceration in military prison.

16. We in the Diaspora have an distinctly pivotal capacity to impede such Israeli policies, by simply speaking out, in an intelligent manner. The Israeli government frequently tends to ignore domestic public opinion on such matters, but remains sensitive to its much-cultivated image in the outside world. Thus, properly raising public awareness in the Diaspora is one of the most effective, and probably by far the most efficient, practical means of saving these innocent girls and women from indescribable travails.

B. Ofek Y. - an example of just one of the many girls currently being assisted:

1. Ofek Y., a Ba'alas Teshuva, not yet 18, has been recently returning to her religious roots, even studying in religious "Midrashiyah." She had applied for her religious exemption.
2. The Army ordered her to appear at a Religiosity Interview (or interrogation), a Rayon Dat ("R.D.") on July 26, '20.
3. In compliance with the directive of Torah authorities, and those familiar with draft hazards, to refuse any such appearances, she declined. The monumental practical dangers, and the consequent Halachic objections involved with the R.D. have been covered online (search First Amendment Activist and Daat Torah blogs, for example).
4. Now, one needs to question: by what right did the Draft Office have to summon Miss Y. to a R.D.? Her religiosity has been established via the standard legal procedures. Once she submitted her religiosity certification, legally speaking, she's entitled to an automatic religious exemption, unless the Army has a bona fide basis to suspect her religiosity. Apparently, they have none.
5. As newly rediscovering her religious roots, her having studied in a nonreligious school should not even register as a blip on the Army radar. Thus, the only legal pretext for a R.D. is some indication of fakery. If so, what is it? Letters from her original attorney have not yet yielded either insight or cooperation from the Army Draft Office.
6. This type of Army treatment pattern - apparently flaunting their own laws or rules - fits a pattern to which we've been increasingly privy, especially in recent months. In fact, this treatment profile actually comports neatly with the Army human-trafficking profile.
7. Alarmingly, ALL girls who have studied in non-religious schools, among those we've been in contact with recently - have been summoned to a Rayon Dat.
8. This policy shift requires girls to hire attorneys many of them can't afford.

9. This creates pressure on the girls to fight the government, risking arrest and often emotionally brutal treatment in Israeli military jail, or else succumb to the draft.

10. According to the Torah, there is no choice. Torah Sages, from the Chazon Ish and Rav Pesach Frank, to the Steipler Gaon, and MANY others, all concur that the female draft is Yai'horaig ve'Al Ya'avov, period.

11. Miss Y. turns 18 in December, and her draft date R"L is scheduled for Jan. 4, '21. After that point, without a formal legal exemption, she would be deemed to be a draft-dodger, and R"L subject to arrest, incarceration in Military Prison, and mistreatment by prison staff frequently filled with animosity towards girls avoiding the draft.

12. Imagine the merit each person reading this could gain by assuming an obligation to assist such heroic individuals, as we approach the Yomim Noraim. And imagine the Midah Keneged Midah recompense in store for those who answer the call.

13. On the other hand, consider the alternative, as articulated in The Jewish Press (in an Op Ed against the Army drafting of girls), Jan. 11, '19, p. 9, end),

"We must ensure that we are not recorded in Heaven amongst those who fail to stand up for people who cannot defend themselves and cry out to us for help. Hashem hears their cries and will, chas v'shalom, exact an extremely heavy price if we abandon them."

14. What a merit such mitzvah would provide us, to live to witness the arrival of the Redemption, for helping save "noshim tzidkoniyyos" (righteous women), in whose merit the Final Redemption will come (Kav HaYashar, 82, see also Gemara Sotah 11, Rus Rabbah 4:11).

There's still time.

A Kesiva v'Chasima Tova,

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"... And if someone, like Pinchos, is one among a multitude, and every man is against him when he dares to speak out for truth and to fight for the Law -- the more lonely his stand, the greater the number of his adversaries, the more powerful is his word, the mightier his deed."

-- Rav Shamshon Raphael Hirsch OB" M (1808-1888), (in "Judaism Eternal," vol. 2, p. 293)

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<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ey5iw7jZJlcK1LtV5l8ODRVJTr2-FGw7th4s8C74v34/edit?usp=sharing> (Ellul 5780 link)

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