

*What is the difference, in your opinion, between Modern Orthodoxy and Centrist Orthodoxy?*

There is absolutely no difference. I think I may have been the first one to insist upon the term "Modern Orthodoxy." In reaction to this, the Charedim expressed malcontent, asking me not to use this term, but I responded to them that if they kept on espousing positions which were completely at variance with what I believed, and never thought of contacting us in advance, I would have to do this.

The term "Orthodox," of course, is one I never liked in the first place, since it means "right-thinking," and that is a *goyish* (non-Jewish) term in many ways. It also gives the impression of having every single thought regulated and so does not account for the fact that there are shades of meaning in Judaism. There are many varieties in the practical, halachic way of thinking, as well as in Hashkafah, even as "tradition" demands certain basics in both areas [as I refer to in my 1986 article "Some Comments on Centrist Orthodoxy" (*Tradition* 22,3)]. In fact, once, in one of the newspapers the OU published many years ago, my brother [R. Maurice Lamm] and I had a debate on this topic. He wanted to use the term "Tradition" and I wanted to retain the label "Orthodoxy," with the proviso that I did not like the name at all because it gives you the impression of being caught in a very rigid system. Halachah is not rigid – there is a *machlokes* on almost every issue except the existence of God. "Orthodoxy" is not really us – it was a term given to us by others. Nothing in the Torah speaks about Orthodoxy. But, for lack of a better mode of identification, we are stuck with it.

In any event, later on I began thinking that the label "Modern" was a bit presumptuous, implying "I am modern and you are not." So we tried the title "Centrist Orthodoxy," and I quickly saw that it was totally misunderstood. "Centrist" does not mean that you have Conservative and Reform Judaism on one side and "Real Judaism" on the other and we are somewhere in the center. That is nonsense. Rather, it means that we are the center *within* the Orthodoxy community. I now try very much to discourage the use of the word "Centrist," because it has been misunderstood and has absolutely no noetic content, in contradistinction to "Modern Orthodoxy," which does.

Some sociologists distinguish between "Modern" and "Centrist" Orthodoxy – which is a *narishkayt* (foolishness). Of course there are varieties within Modern Orthodoxy, just as there are varieties within Charedi Judaism; none of us is monolithic. But there is absolutely no essential difference between these titles in terms of the group they describe.

*How do you see Modern Orthodoxy in relation to other Jewish sects?*

This is a very big question. Included in this discussion are Charedim, Modern Orthodox, and then Conservative, Reform, secularists, and atheists. We have to take a position on all of them, of course, but the position should never be firm because they change and we change, and so we have to reassess the situation constantly.

Let us proceed from the right to the left. Within Orthodoxy, of course, there are many different points of view. The term "Charedim" refers to a very broad category of people, consisting of Chasidim, Misnaggedim, *Yekes* (German Jews), and all kinds of different people whom I respect, as long as they are serious people. I myself come from a background which might be described as semi-Charedi, by which I mean that I learned in Mesivta Torah Vodaath

through high school plus one year afterwards. But that was in the days when the yeshivah was sort of Charedi, but not strictly so; they were against going to college, but the unofficial policy was, "If you go, don't tell me," so a lot of the boys went on to Brooklyn College. This was the Charedi world in which I grew up. How do I feel about them? If they are not in conformity with civilized behavior, like the Neturei Karta who went to Iran, I do not respect them. If, however, they are civilized, in the sense of not being truculent or savage in presenting their views, I do respect them. Still, I deplore Charedi attacks on us. Sometimes, the discussion goes into the gutter instead of into the boxing ring. But, nevertheless, I will make every effort, as I have from the very beginning, to keep dialogue with them open, even as that sometimes becomes very difficult – for them and for us.

Connected with Charedi Orthodoxy is an anti-Zionist, or at least non-Zionist, tendency. There is a difference between the two: Satmar Chasidim, it is true, are anti-Zionists, but most other Charedi groups are simply non-Zionist – some more so and others less so. Another aspect of Charedi Orthodoxy is an emphasis on *talmud Torah*. I have often deplored the fact that in the 40's and 50's, official Orthodoxy made such a big issue of the required size of a *mechitsah* in a *shul*. It is definitely an issue, but it should not have been *the* issue. What should have been more prominent is the question of how much Torah an Orthodox Jew learns and his *kevi'as ittim la-Torah* – whether he learns once a week, three times a week, or every day. That is so much more of a respectable criterion for the definition of a person as Orthodox than is the size of the *mechitsah* in his *shul*. *Talmud Torah* is and should be the essence of Orthodoxy.

With regard to Conservatism, it is very hard to define a movement which exists by reason of negating others. I am not sure what Conservatism means, and I do not think they are sure what it means. "I'm not Reform and I'm not Orthodox, so what am I? I must be Conservative." I am exaggerating, of course. There is a lot of good work done in the Conservative Movement. But fundamentally, it defines itself as the distance between two points. It is not enough to give them a *raison d'être* from a historical point of view. Look at what happened to them this past year: they lost the membership of 100 temples in their movement, and for them, a temple is the ultimate criterion of religious success. For us, of course, it is not. You can *daven* in a *shutbl*, a synagogue, or at home. For them, though, there is ~~no~~ hardly such a thing as *davening* at home as an institution, and so this loss of temples becomes a major problem for them.

Early Reform was, in some ways, far worse from our point of view than modern Reform, but in some ways much better, too, because it all began slowly with the 1817 Hamburg Temple and the 1885 Pittsburgh Platform, etc. Today, Reform Judaism is going in two opposite directions at the same time – one more intensely religiously committed, the other religiously more indifferent.

I will tell you a story that happened to me as a rabbi in Springfield, Massachusetts in 1954. The president of my *shul*, a widower, after a long search, finally remarried a lovely, fine Reform Jewish woman. She promised her husband that she would be Orthodox, keep a kosher home, and go to *shul* with him: Friday night, he accompanied her to a Reform temple and Shabbos morning she accompanied him to my Orthodox *shul*. [Interestingly, before she came to *shul* to *daven* with us, she read her Reform prayers at home, which in many ways mirrors what we Orthodox Jews do when we have a bar mitzvah or wedding in a Reform or Conservative congregation.] One day, though, they had a *machlokes* and they came to me. What was the problem? He opened up and said, "Tell her she's overdoing it: she so much insists on separating *milchigs* and *fleishigs* that she uses different matchboxes to light the stove."

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What you see, then, from this story is that there is a lot of variance within Reform and there are Reform Jews who are very serious about it. Most of us see Reform Judaism as a social institution, in which people get together and go to a golf club, without much observance. But that is not the real Reform. Real Reform Jews believe that their *derech* is the real *retson Hashem*. I have not met many Reform Jews like this woman and I suspect there are very few, but, then again, not so many Orthodox Jews are beyond reproach...

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In any event, this is what I think ~~to be~~ is the general denominational situation at present. What binds us together, of course, is a fundamental commitment to *Kelal Yisrael*, which means we take the People of Israel as a real, halachic category. Also, almost all of us are Zionists, whether we belong to any of the Zionist party parties or not, and affirm the establishment and continued existence of the State of Israel as beneficial divine acts.

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*Fifty years ago, pundits predicted that Orthodoxy would die, but it did just the opposite. What do you see as the trajectories of the various denominations in Judaism over the next 50 years?*

This past April, Bar-Ilan University invited me to receive an honorary degree, and I accepted. They asked me to give several lectures the day of the ceremony, and so, in preparing a lecture the day before, I got a call from the *Jerusalem Post* asking me if they could send over a reporter for an emergency immediate interview. I agreed, though in retrospect I should not have, since in any interview a lot of us say things which we later regret – not because they are wrong but because they were probably will be taken the wrong way. In the course of the interview, one of the questions the interviewer asked me was: "What do you think about the future of religious Jewry, especially Conservative and Reform?" And I allowed myself to be completely open, honest, which was, of course, a mistake, because I should have avoided that trap. I said – these are *mamash* my words – "With a heavy heart, we will soon say *Kaddish* on the Reform and Conservative Movements." Of course, this set off an avalanche of criticism – some of it gentle and polite, and some of it awful, especially among Conservatives. It did not bother Reform Jews too much, because it is we are too far away from them. Also, there There is a sociological principle at play here: ideologically, your greatest enemy is the guy group right next to you, because you have to say, "Me, not him." differentiate between seemingly close or even identical commitments. So Conservatives kept on speaking about my insult to them, the fact that we do not give them any credit – anything under the sun. One fellow said I was hateful.

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Overall, they felt insulted and disrespected and claimed that I was triumphalistic in my predictions.<sup>ii</sup> That is, of course, nonsense – apparently they do not read English. I said I was "heartbroken." What should I say – that I think they have a glorious future? I do not believe that. When they told us 50-60 years ago that Orthodoxy was about to disappear – when Ben-Gurion gave in to the many requests that the Israeli Army keep kosher because, he said, "Don't worry – in 50 years, no one is going to care about this" – we felt bad, but we did not feel insulted. In fact, we thought that he and the others might be right – and certainly constituted a challenge to us. In the case of the Conservative and Reform Movements, though, this is what is going to happen happening, and we, as Orthodox Jews, should feel aggrieved have to hope that this loss of Jews see to it that it does not happen. Having sat in the driver's seat in terms of numbers for so long, the Conservative and Reform Movements naturally felt terribly endangered by this statement, but having openly declared that I was broken-hearted by this historic development I refused to retract because there is nothing to retract.

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In addition, one Reform rabbi wrote in a journal that I had claimed that Conservative Judaism will collapse under its own weight and Reform Judaism is now the largest movement. That is only true, though, if you count everyone who comes to a Reform temple, a significant number of whom are not actually Jewish according to halachic standards. In that context, I used the word "goyim." One fellow said, "What an insult to use such vulgar terms!" Vulgar terms? "Goyim" is in the Torah and in the Talmud! What is vulgar about the word "goyim?" I remember when Secretary of State Colin Powell started a speech by saying proudly that when he was a youngster his past was built around the fact that he was a Shabbos goy in the Bronx. Goyim know that they are goyim – it is the Jews who do not know that they are goyim. Yes, we Jews too constitute a "goy."

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When I ~~was in~~ visited a congregation in New Zealand some time ago I ~~looked up to the~~ and noticed that there was not a single recognizable Jewish face in the women's balcony there. I see the same thing in many other places as well. I think the acceptance of patrilineal descent is the worst thing Reform Judaism could have done in all its history, and the problems have already started coming up when people today want to marry Jews raised in the Reform Movement. They have erased a real fundamental of *Yidishkayt* that should have been a uniting principle for all of us.

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In any event, I have made it crystal clear through everything I have written since 1955 that I have great respect for other Jewish movements. Before that point, I had grown up with a very strong anti-non-Orthodox feeling that anything relating to Jews of other denominations was *treyf*. That is the way it was. I grew up in Williamsburg – what more can I say? This was the prevalent attitude, and I tried to justify it to myself.

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Later on, though, I changed my mind completely. It was early in my career in Springfield when I heard that there was a *minhag le-doros* that on a particular day every year, the Reform temple Sinai had services at the local congregational church. When I first found out, I was terribly upset. I got up that Shabbos and thundered from the pulpit, as only a young, brash rabbi can: "Sinai at the church! Sinai, where we heard the words, 'Anochi Hashem Elokecha' and 'Lo yihyeh lecha elohim acherim al panai!' ~~We are~~ Are we going to celebrate a joining going to make a unification between monotheists that and those who say there are three gods?!" After everything was over, one man whom ~~who was a leading figure in the congregation without~~ ~~actually being an officer~~ someone I respected as an intelligent and wise lawyer – said to me quietly, "Tell me, rabbi, do you think you convinced anyone?" "What do you mean?" I replied. "You succeeded only in deepening the gulf between us and them," he said. "Your rhetoric was excellent but your ideas should not be made public that way." I thought about it and concluded that his criticism was correct.

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And so, I decided not to do it anymore; if I had criticisms, I tried not to be so blunt about them. At that point, I understood that you cannot make any progress by insulting people. We have to be honest with and respectful of each other, even when we disagree. I have written several articles about this and I stick by them to this day. I changed my mind, not in the content of what believed, as much as in the method of articulating it. I began to realize that in almost cases, if a member of a Conservative or Reform temple leaves his or her temple, it is not that we have won a new convert to Orthodoxy, but the defection is to a temple which is less observant of Torah – or to nothing, that is to assimilate completely.

*If, in your opinion, these other Jewish movements are doomed to failure, should we make an attempt to save them from that fate, and, if so, how?*



Of course we should try to save them and not turn our backs on them. Every Jew who is lost to *Yidishkayt* is a tragedy – a tragedy for all of Israel. And so we have to *davka* proactively conduct dialogue with them. As I said before, the Conservative Movement lost 100 temples this year and now they are in a panic, struggling to get the right answer, key to greater loyalty I feel very bad for them and believe that *kol mah she-efshar le-hatsil natsil* (we should save whatever we can). Otherwise, it just means that more Jews will be lost. They are not going to come to *daven* at an Orthodox *minyan* on Shabbos; they simply will not come, period, if we do nothing.

Some years ago, R. Yitz Greenberg, a graduate of a Musar yeshivah way on the right and the founding president of CLAL [the National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership], and a friend of mine with whom I often disagree profoundly, kept on talking was speaking all over the country about pluralism, uniting Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform Judaism. A lot of people Many people were going along with what he said, because, they felt, we are American Jews – everything is good, everything is kosher, and we must live in the modern world (as if everyone else was not living in the modern world). He invited me to speak for CLAL about relations amongst the so-called Jewish sects, and I accepted, which occasioned some surprise among some of my colleagues.

In that speech, I told the audience what I thought in as elegant a fashion as I could, expressing my *ani ma'amin* (guiding religious dogma) about the relations amongst the various denominations. Essentially, I said that there is a basic difference between “validity” and “legitimacy.” The first refers to facts – for instance, how many people do they have? They The other “denominations” have many more people than we do, so they are a valid Jewish group. Furthermore, these are Jews (except for those who are patrilineally descended) who want to remain Jewishly connected and mean well. But while they are “valid,” they are not “legitimate.” “Legitimate” comes from the Latin word “legitimus,” which means lawful, legal. Anyone who does not accept *Torah she-be-Al Peh, or Halakha* and everything that follows from that cannot be called legitimate. And therefore I said that our attitude towards non-Orthodox Jews must be the attitude taken towards a group that is validly Jewish and wants to remain such but has a totally different, illegitimate outlook on Judaism. If their leaders are honorable and honest and call themselves “rabbi,” I will call them “rabbi,” too. That does not bother me. The nomenclature does not make much sense anyway.

(When Reform and Conservative Judaism came up with the idea of giving *semichah* to women, I had a dear friend, [redacted] who was, at the time, [redacted] and was also [redacted]. He was a firebrand – a powerful, honorable, and honest fellow man. When he heard what had happened, he was get very upset and called all kinds of meetings to discuss this “terrible breach” by the Reform and Conservative Movements. He even got several Rashei Yeshivah to write articles that this went against Halachah and was, *al pi din* (lawfully), a *ziyyuf* (forgery). At that point, I told him, “You know [redacted] I don’t understand you. Let’s say these women were men; would you get so excited? We have Reform, Conservative, and Reconstructionist rabbis in this country, and no one gets especially upset about that, which means the whole thing is simply sexist. If you have a Reform rabbi who doesn’t many not know *alef-beis* and is *mattir* all sorts of things including eating on Yom Kippur – him you can call don’t mind calling a rabbi and this woman who may have learned a *blatt Gemara* – you can’t abide calling her a rabbi?” Sometimes we get stuck on nonsense, and the issue of the titles we give people is just one example of that.)

In any event, that is the position I developed at the time – one that grants validity without legitimacy to other Jewish movements. That said, we should, of course, continue to dialogue

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with them and reach out to them as much as possible, provided they are ardently Jewish from their point of view.

*In your opinion, how are Jewish denominations, and the relationships between them, different in Israel from those in America?*

Israel is very much a different public than America. In Israel, Conservatism and Reform have not made an impact – not at all. The little impact they have they trump up in their public relations. However, what Israel does have that we do not is the new phenomenon of a secular Jew – a Jew who wants to be a Jew, loves being a Jew, wants his children to be Jews, loves Israel, may even agree to a rabbinic wedding, may even set a time for the study of Talmud -- but is not observant and is neither not Reform nor Conservative. He may even be in some sense atheistic. For him, Judaism is embodied by the secular State of Israel. In America, however, there really is hardly no such a thing as a truly secular Jew. Belief in God is there at least in word. On the other side, though, we have problems they do not have. The fact that we have several distinct groups that are non-Orthodox is not an issue for them, basically. So there are differences between us and them – not profound, but differences nonetheless.

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*Could you comment on the nature of the relationship between RIETS and other denominations' theological seminaries?*

~~I am sort of in doubt.~~ I do not think that we should develop any sort of formal relationship with the other seminaries, because, after all everything is said and done, according to middas ha-din (the letter of the law), they are in a very questionable category religiously. However, I think we have to have some informal relations with them. Our rabbanim should at least be told a little bit of what they believe before they go into the rabbinate. ~~I once considered teaching a course on the subject but decided against it because there would be a lot of opposition.~~ Of course, I am not against opposition – I have done a lot of unpopular things in my time – but I felt it just would not work. So what we should do instead is teach them about these other groups and hope to encourage them to mix with them without being influenced by them. The CJF in particular provides opportunities for our young people – boys and girls – to meet with Jews of other affiliations in an unofficial but very good context. I think such interaction to be important if only because one has to be respectful and honorable in dealing with other Jews. In addition, we can learn something from them; all the wisdom in the world is not with us.

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I also think that we should introduce our children to the existence of Conservative and Reform Judaism at a certain age, though I do not know when. Similarly, it is a good idea to expose our children to the opposite gender, at least for some period in their lives. When I first came to New York, I joined the Board of Jewish Education of Greater New York. Some of the day schools in the system had co-ed classes and others had separate classes. I am personally in favor of having mixed classes until the 4<sup>th</sup> grade and then separating, because I think that it is not good for boys to grow up not knowing what that a girl looks like is human I was raised in Torah Vodaath and I am embarrassed by the strange ideas we had about girls. This issue has to be taken care of at a very early stage, and then, once the children start to seriously learn Torah, classes should be separate, just as davening is separate.

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*How important are ikkarei ha-emunah in defining a person as Orthodox? What, in your opinion, distinguishes Orthodox Judaism from Conservative or Reform Judaism?*



There is a lot to answer here. Going back to the period of the Rishonim, there are those for whom *ikkarei ha-emunah* are the ultimate test of a Jew and, if you accept these principles but your practice does not reflect that, you go to *Geihinnom* (there are cooler levels, presumably, for different levels of sin); if you do not accept these *ikkarim* at all, however, you are not a Jew. That is Rambam's *shittah*. Rambam, of course, was a philosopher, in addition to being ~~a~~ the ideal *talmid chacham*, so for him the intellect was at the top of the agenda. That is why he takes the Mishnah in the 10<sup>th</sup> perek of *Sanhedrin*<sup>iii</sup> literally and then *paskens* that way in *Hilchos Teshuvah*<sup>iv</sup> – if one does not accept certain principles, he is not part of *Kelal Yisrael*. Others, though disagree with Rambam. In the end, Orthodox Jews clearly hold of *ikkarei ha-emunah*, but not such that those who do not ~~believe in~~ accept them are no longer considered Jews. As far as their *Olam ha-Ba* is concerned, I will write them a letter of recommendation to get into a cooler place...

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And so, the main distinction between Orthodox Judaism on one side and Conservative and Reform Judaism on the other is that we accept the totality of Torah, understanding that there are *machlokos* and different opinions on many issues, while they do not.

*What impact do you think the Maharat phenomenon, along with other attempts at egalitarianism within Halakhah, will have on Modern Orthodoxy?*

There are certain things that are acceptable only in the long run. I approve of the idea of increasing the role of women in religious life and think it is an important one. I think we have been neglecting 51 or 52 percent of our brainpower throughout the ages. Just imagine – we have taken women who have good brains, good characters, and good personalities and devoted their lives to Hitler's 3 K's: Kinder (children), Küche (kitchen), and Kirche (church)! Women are not just good for these three things. There are enough individual cases that are exceptions to allow you to learn *min ha-perat el ha-kelal* (from the specific case to the general category). It is just not true that they cannot think straight – they can. We have crooked ideas if we think otherwise.

At the same time, things have to be done gradually. To have a woman learn Gemara a generation or two ago like women learn Gemara today would have been too revolutionary. But with time, things change; time answers a lot of questions, erodes discomfort, and helps. So my answer, when I was asked by a reporter about what I think about women rabbis, was, basically: "It's going too fast." I did not say it was wrong, I did not say it was right. It just has not paced itself properly. I was criticized, of course. People asked, "You mean that *al pi din* they're allowed to become rabbis?" My response: "I don't know – are you sure they're not allowed to?" I do not *paskn shayles* that are not real. This is not a real question for me – it is too early to tell where this is all headed and I think they are moving much too quickly. ~~It should not be an issue, eventually, but right now, I think, it is an issue.~~

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Do I think having women rabbis is a good thing? I do not know. I am, however, concerned that, before long, we will find ourselves overly feminized, and I would not want to see that happen. Women will begin complaining about why they cannot be Kohanot and *duchen*. I can name 100 different halachos that just do not work with women – for instance, a woman cannot be an *ed kiddushin* (a witness for betrothal). Can a woman read one *berachah* of the *sheva berachos*? I feel uncomfortable with it, but I would not blame anyone who allowed it. When it comes down to it, I am a believer that there are differences between men and women that should be reflected in halachic practice.

*What do you think to be the greatest struggle Orthodoxy faces in the coming decades?*



The big problems we are going to have in the future are not going to come from Conservative and Reform Judaism. I think Reform will gradually dissipate, because they have more *goyim* than Jews in their ranks, and the Conservatives are in big trouble as a movement. The problem will really be the people who are neither Orthodox nor Conservative nor Reform – rather, nothing-Jews, who do not even ~~identity with~~ have the State of Israel ~~to~~. Will these Jews be a problem for Orthodoxy? Of course – every problem which affects the Jewish people is a problem for Orthodoxy. The problem of Jews not identifying with Judaism or Israel is our problem, too, even though we do. We cannot hide in this cocoon of “We can get along without the rest of the world.” It is like men saying that they can get along without women in the world – for a generation, they can, but after that they are just stuck. So we have to make sure to reach out to these Jews who have no sense of Jewish identity.

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The greater struggle, though, is achieving peace within our camps, particularly resolving the sharp differences between the Modern Orthodox and Charedim. The insults I have suffered from the Charedi extremists will testify to the level of enmity that exists. This problem actually came up in the whole question a long time ago of “*Mi Hu Yehudi?*” (Who is a Jew?), which was a terrible issue for Israel for several governments. When Yitzhak Shamir was prime minister, he was facing this critical problem all over again, so he called me to ask if I could help him. The particular case at that point was that a *goy* had converted to Reform Judaism and wanted to go on *aliyyah*. (I do not know anyone of that sort – a person converted here by Reform who wants to go on *aliyyah* – but apparently they found such an unlikely candidate ~~a guy~~.) This was the cause of great confusion in Israel and the whole government was in danger of falling. I responded that I had an idea but that I could not put it into action by myself. I asked him to send me a representative of the Israeli government and have him do the legwork, because I was not the right person to do it and I did not have the time, on top of it.

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So Shamir sent Cabinet Secretary Elyakim Rubenstein, who is now a member of the Supreme Court. He is a lovely fellow, a very good lawyer, and one who carries a set of Mishnayos with him wherever he goes. I told Rubenstein that my idea was to satisfy Halachah, as well as the Reform and Conservative Movements. I proposed that we have two groups. The first group would be composed of Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform rabbis and would interview a conversion candidate to test ~~find out~~ if he or she was ~~were~~ honorable and real and whether he or she could be trusted to do what he or she said. Then, if that first group approved the candidate, which it probably would, the case would go on to an Orthodox *beis din*. Who would be on the *beis din*? If they would have R. Avraham Sherman, forget about it; if they would have R. Chaim Druckman, though, that would be another story. The goal would be to have rabbis who would *paskn* on conversion cases according to the *Shulchan Aruch*, which is the most *meikel* authority of all. They would do everything *al pi din*, but not necessarily satisfy *Hamodia*.

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Things began to fall into place. Rubenstein managed to get several important Reform people on our side, including Executive Director Glazer, who was very favorable to what I was planning and felt that no one would be insulted. Later on, some of the Reform rabbis who were left-wingers were very annoyed because they saw through the fact that I was not recognizing them halachically – which I do not – but he got them to quietly, yet officially, agree to this plan. R. Ismar Schorsch, who was then the head of JTS, felt that he could not be left out once Orthodox and Reform had signed on, so we got him to agree as well.

But then, Rubenstein also visited the late and brilliant R. Moshe Sherer, the Chairman of the Agudath Israel World Organization. He told him something that I hesitate to repeat – that if Rubenstein had gone to the Agudah instead of me first, he would have had it done by now. In



other words, he was being completely political, and that killed the whole thing, which sometimes justifies a little bit of my animus against the Agudah (of whose youth group I was a member).

So that struggle between Modern Orthodox and Charedi Judaism continues and is one of the most significant issues we have to face going forward.

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<sup>i</sup> Matthew Wagner, "Non-Orthodox Judaism Disappearing," *The Jerusalem Post*, May 10, 2009. Available at:  
<http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1241773223823&pagename=JPArticle%2FShowFull>

<sup>ii</sup> Jonathan Sarna, "Saying Kaddish Too Soon," *Forward*, June 5, 2009. Available at:  
<http://www.forward.com/articles/106674/>.

<sup>iii</sup> *Sanhedrin* 10:1.

<sup>iv</sup> *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhos Teshuvah* 3:6.

<sup>v</sup> See the Wikipedia article on Rabbi Dr. Lamm, which details this incident as well:  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Norman\\_Lamm](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Norman_Lamm).