

The Nishma Research Profile of American Modern Orthodox Jews Summary Report

Religious beliefs and practices, views on the importance of Orthodoxy as a part of life, shul life, Jewish study, women's roles, children's education, sexuality, Israel connection and advocacy, overall successes, opportunities and challenges

September 28, 2017



*Sponsored by
the Micah
Foundation*

Introduction

This survey was conducted by Nishma Research, a sociological and market research firm serving the Jewish community. Nishma means “we will hear” and our mission is to conduct research that promotes listening within and among the diverse strands of the Jewish world.

The study’s goal is to share the findings, including the areas presenting opportunities for improvements, those where respondents see problems and challenges, and those where Modern Orthodoxy has achieved successes from which the Jewish community might draw lessons. The findings are being broadly shared with the Jewish community, rabbis, educators, lay leaders and others in the hope that this will promote understanding, appreciation and discussion of the views, priorities, concerns and issues of greatest importance. It is our hope that such discussion will create productive conclusions and directions for Modern Orthodoxy.

Why This Research Was Conducted

Much research has been done among various Jewish populations, including such major studies as the 2011 Jewish Community Study of NY and the 2013 Pew Research Portrait of American Jews. But many past studies have had limited value for those who want to more deeply and specifically understand the Modern Orthodox Jewish community.

- **Limited Focus To Date on Modern Orthodoxy** – Surveys of the Jewish community often include representatively small percentages of Orthodox and Modern Orthodox (who comprise about 10% and 4%, respectively, of the US Jewish population). The studies cited above surveyed approximately 600 and 154 Modern Orthodox Jews, respectively. Small sample sizes limit the ability to examine differences within Modern Orthodoxy (by gender, age, sub-denominations, etc.), which are important to develop a deeper understanding. Our goal therefore was to draw upon a large, statistically representative sample that would enable such deeper examination.
- **Limited Coverage of Topics Particularly Relevant to Modern Orthodoxy** – Jewish communal surveys typically cover many issues aimed at the broad spectrum of Jews, including Conservative, Reform, etc., and devote only part of the survey to the issues, attitudes and concerns that are particularly – and often uniquely – relevant to Modern Orthodoxy. Our survey questionnaire was developed based on interviews and expert guidance, to ensure that we explored the issues most relevant to Modern Orthodoxy.

Research Process

The study design involved a broad literature review; individual interviews; survey development and testing by experienced researchers; and guidance by an advisory group comprised of people knowledgeable of the community, including rabbinic and lay leaders, sociologists, educators and academics.

In order to obtain a statistically reliable and representative sample of the Modern Orthodox community, the survey was fielded via outreach to rabbis and synagogues, who informed their members of the survey. See the next page for discussion of the survey’s distribution method and sample representativeness.

Thank You

- To the advisory group (see page 95 of the full report) for their input and support, and to other Jewish communal rabbis and lay leaders who provided survey suggestions.
- To the RCA (Rabbinical Council of America) and Rabbi Mark Dratch, for notifying and encouraging the support of their approximately 1,000 member rabbis; and to all the shul rabbis who expressed enthusiasm for this survey, and who helped us to reach thousands in the Modern Orthodox community.
- To the members of the community who took the time to share their thoughts. We hope you enjoy reading this report and reflecting on the findings.

Sponsorship

This study is sponsored by a grant from the Micah Foundation. The foundation is directed by members of the Modern Orthodox community and its mission is to promote and enhance Jewish religious and cultural life.

Disclaimer

Nishma Research is solely responsible for conducting this survey, the questions asked, and all analysis and reporting. An advisory group participated in developing the survey questions and advised on the analysis. Rabbis and shuls throughout the US helped by informing their members of the survey, but were not involved in the analysis or reporting of this independent effort.

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September 28, 2017

Survey Methodology

We sought a larger sample of Modern Orthodox Jews than surveys have achieved to date, in order for the overall findings to have a high level of statistical reliability and, perhaps even more importantly, so that we could delve into sub-groups to identify possible significant differences by demographic and other characteristics.

The objective was to reach the broad community, and we did so through synagogues, primarily through the Rabbinical Council of America (RCA) – the largest Orthodox rabbinic organization in the US – which informed all of its nearly 1,000 member rabbis of the survey and asked them to participate in presenting the survey to their congregants. This achieved breadth of coverage (synagogue affiliation is virtually universal among the Modern Orthodox), and the approach employed neutral language emphasizing the desire to broadly obtain community views (see “Sample Email” to the right).

We used a web-based opt-in survey method. We did not pose the survey directly to individuals (via emails, advertising, social media, etc.), because we wanted to avoid disproportionately drawing upon “activists” who are interested in pet issues or reaching some sort of “Facebook vocal minority.”

The social research profession advises treating web-based opt-in surveys with caution. That means, for example, that we should draw conclusions only if the findings are rather pronounced and we have good theoretical reason to believe them. We follow that approach throughout our analysis. We seek findings that have statistical validity and have underlying theoretical rationale.

While two broad surveys (the 2011 Jewish Community Study of NY and the 2013 Pew Research Study) have been conducted in the past few years, their samples of Modern Orthodox are much smaller than ours and our survey questions are much broader in terms of the issues explored. These two factors limit the comparability of the survey findings. Finally, we note that, for many of the questions in this survey, there is no historical trend data. We encourage researchers and sociologists to further explore the issues probed in this survey.

Sample Email Used to Disseminate Survey to Approximately 1,000 Modern Orthodox Synagogue Rabbis



Participation in Survey of the Orthodox Community

A broad survey is about to be undertaken in the Orthodox community, and this is a very good opportunity for us to find out more about what shul congregants think across a wide range of issues. The survey is online, totally anonymous and is being conducted and funded by Orthodox researchers as a way to inform our community.

If you wish to support this worthwhile effort - and I hope you will avail yourself of this opportunity - please send an email to your congregants telling them about the survey and encouraging them to go to the link <http://bit.ly/Orthodox-Survey> to complete it. And if you can send a reminder email a couple of weeks later that would be helpful. The survey will be available online July 1 through August 31.

Here is some draft language you can draw upon in an email to your shul members:

Our shul has been invited to participate in a survey of the Orthodox community. The survey is conducted by Nishma Research and sponsored by the Micah Foundation. Both are Orthodox, as are rabbis, synagogue and educational leaders who have been guiding the study.

The survey covers a wide range of issues relevant to Orthodox Jews, such as shul and davening, Jewish education and learning, raising a family, issues of concern to women, success and challenges of living an Orthodox life in today's society, etc.

The survey is online and can be accessed at <http://bit.ly/Orthodox-Survey>. I encourage you (men and women age 18 or older) to participate.

The survey is totally anonymous. Results will be analyzed and reported for everyone combined, and not identified by any individuals or shuls. Nishma will share the findings with shul rabbis and congregants. This is a great opportunity to learn what issues are on people's minds, so we encourage you to participate.

Survey Responses

This Report Focuses on the Modern Orthodox Community

This report presents findings based on responses from 3,903 individuals in the U.S. who identified themselves as “Modern Orthodox or Centrist Orthodox.” Top-line results (all respondents combined) are presented for all questions, often broken out by gender and age. The appendix includes summary data for Modern Orthodox in other countries, U.S. Chareidi and U.S. Non-Orthodox who attend an Orthodox synagogue (see page 94 of the full report).

Sample Accuracy and Statistical Testing

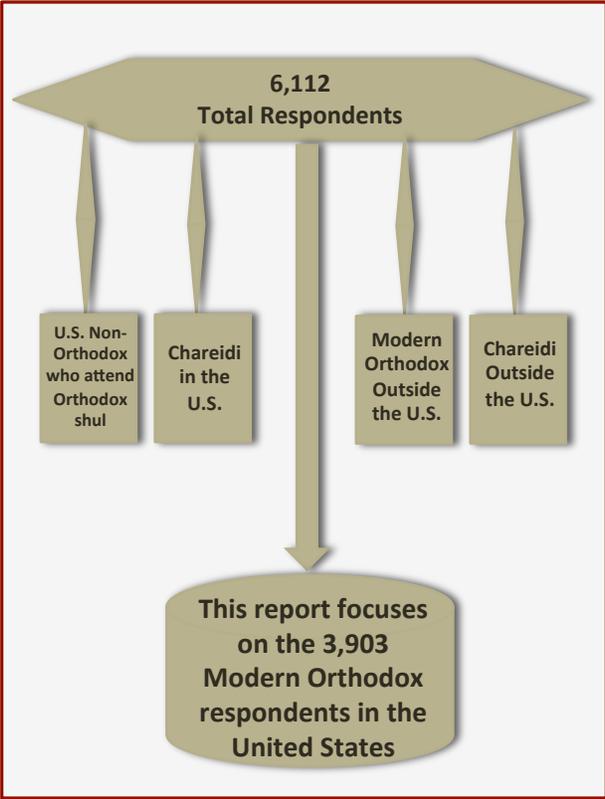
All survey questions were asked of the Modern Orthodox and the overall responses for the group are accurate within $\pm 1.7\%$ at the standard 95% confidence interval.

The full report indicates findings where there are differences with high levels of statistical significance, for example, when comparing men and women, different age groups, across the denominations within Modern Orthodoxy, etc.

Terminology

In our interviews and in testing the survey, we found that the term “Modern Orthodox” is often interpreted differently. For example, while some see it as essentially “centrist observance,” others see it as more liberal. We therefore used the term “Modern or Centrist Orthodox” as more encompassing in the questionnaire, and all of the respondents self-identified as belonging to this group (see Q1 wording in the footnote below). For brevity, we use the term “Modern Orthodox” in this report when we refer to the entire broad group.

Footnotes display the wording for each question and the number of respondents (denoted as “n”) for each group reported.



Q1. Regardless of your synagogue affiliation, which of the following categories best describes your approach to Judaism? Would you say you are ... – Modern Orthodox or Centrist Orthodox; Yeshivish / Litvish / Agudah; Chasidic, Chabad; Not Orthodox – Please describe (n = 6,112). Q1 was the only mandatory question, to which a response was required.

Q2. [Asked of those who are not Orthodox per Q1] Do you regularly attend an Orthodox synagogue? – Yes; No (survey terminates); n = 357.

Geographic Location – The survey website captured respondents’ web browser geographic location, which were used to identify those in the United States and those in other countries (see pages 79-83 of the full report for demographic information on survey respondents, including geographic information).

Summary of Key Findings

Introduction

This profile of American Modern Orthodox Jews was conducted and supported by Modern Orthodox researchers, including an advisory group comprised of sociologists, educators, community leaders and rabbis.

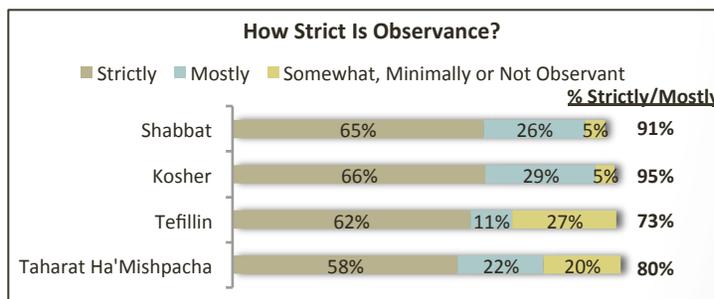
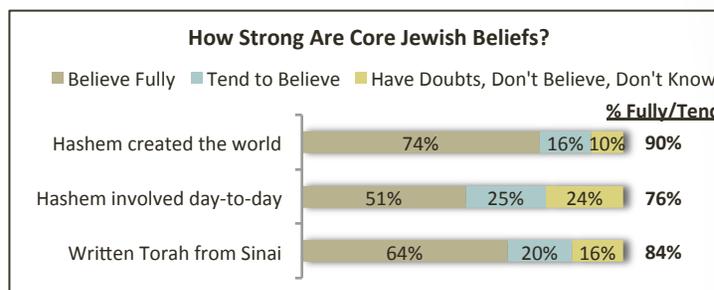
With 3,903 respondents in the US, this is the largest broad survey of the Modern Orthodox community. The community represents only about 4% of all American Jewry, with about 220,000 Modern Orthodox adults in the US (according to Pew Research*). This survey's sample size yields stronger statistical reliability than those of the relatively small Modern Orthodox segments contained in large-scale national studies of the Jewish population. Additionally, the questions asked in this study are not those that are typically asked of all American Jews (e.g., Conservative, Reform, unaffiliated, etc.), but are specifically focused on the issues most relevant to today's Modern Orthodox Jews.

This section of the report summarizes many of the key findings. The full report has much more detail on the topics explored. Additionally, the survey generated a wealth (over 130,000 words) of verbatim responses that shed great additional insight on the enormous diversity and passion of people's views, and will inform the reader in ways that go beyond the statistics.**

Beliefs and Observance

90% believe fully or tend to believe that *Hashem* created the world, but one in four (24%) have doubts or disbelieve in *Hashem's* involvement in the world's day-to-day activities.

- About two-thirds are strictly Shabbat and *kashrut* observant, and 90%+ are strictly or mostly observant.
- There is less strict observance of *taharat ha'mishpacha* among marrieds (58%) and less strict observance of *tefillin* among men (62% overall and 56% among men ages 18 to 44).



It is interesting to note that the levels of belief and observance are not dissimilar to what Pew found among American Modern Orthodox Jews.

* A Portrait of Jewish Americans: Findings from a Pew Research Center Survey of U.S. Jews, October 1, 2013

** Verbatim responses are in the document "Modern Orthodox Survey Comments October 2017.pdf" – available at <http://nishmaresearch.com/social-research.html>.

Summary of Key Findings *(Continued)*

Fragmentation Within Modern Orthodoxy

Modern Orthodoxy is the branch of Judaism that attempts to synthesize traditional Jewish values and observance of *Halacha* with the secular, modern world.

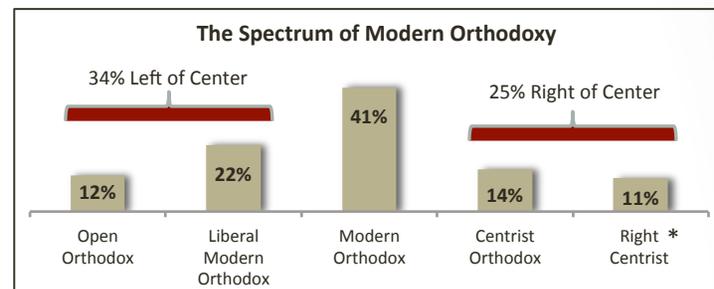
One of the issues that has been increasingly raised in recent years is that of the alleged fragmentation within Modern Orthodoxy. Some have spoken of a “schism” that could result from broadening differences in beliefs and attitudes.

To start exploring this issue, we asked respondents to position themselves across the spectrum. The “denominational” self-identification we obtained resembles a bell curve (see chart to the upper right), a plurality (41%) are in the middle, 34% on the left and 25% on the right.

As we explore the question of fragmentation, we will examine variations in views by age, gender and denominations (see, for example, the chart to the right) across a wide range of issues, including some where strong disagreements have been voiced (e.g., the role of women, an area of particular contention).

Wider variations of views suggest that it might be more difficult for the community to consider whether and how to address the differences.

We will also explore whether Modern Orthodoxy is shifting in observance “to the left or to the right,” whether the left and right are drawing further apart, and the implications of such shifts.



Variations in Belief and Observance – Across Modern Orthodoxy

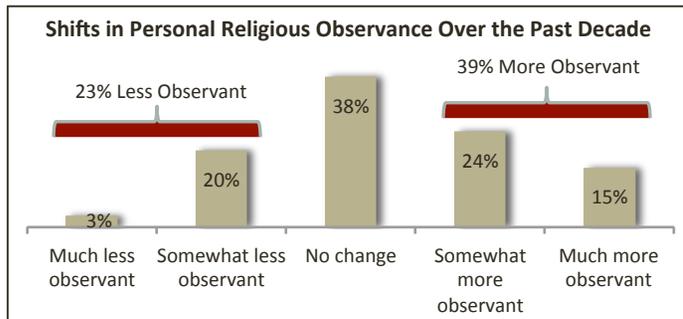
	Open Orthodox	Liberal Modern Orthodox	Modern Orthodox	Centrist & Right-Centrist
Hashem created the world (% believe fully or tend to believe)	75%	80%	95%	98%
Written Torah from Sinai (% believe fully or tend to believe)	58%	70%	92%	96%
Shabbat (% strictly or mostly observant)	82%	83%	95%	99%
Tefillin (% strictly or mostly observant)	45%	53%	76%	90%

* The survey questionnaire labeled the “right-most” segment as “Right-wing Centrist Orthodox (e.g., tending toward Yeshivish).” For brevity, we refer to it in this report as “Right Centrist.” Additionally, we may use the informal vernacular terms “to the right” or “to the left” as abbreviated ways to denote directions across the denominational spectrum.

Summary of Key Findings *(Continued)*

Shifting Level of Observance, Polarization Within Modern Orthodoxy and the Danger of Schism

While some are moving to the left (becoming less observant or leaving the fold and going “*off the derech*”*), there is a sense and there has been conjecture that Modern Orthodoxy as a whole has been shifting toward greater observance, i.e., “moving to the right.” This survey confirms that to in fact be the case: 39% of respondents say they have become more observant and 23% say they have become less observant – a “net rightward shift” of +16%.



Women (+12%) have shifted to the right less than men (+21%), and elsewhere in this report we shall see areas of dissatisfaction among women.

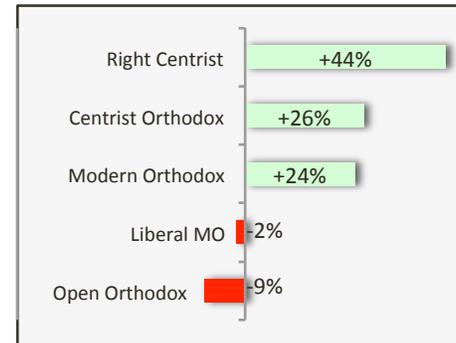
A more noteworthy trend is the differences among denominations: the right and center have shifted strongly further to the right, while the left has moved slightly more to the left (see chart in upper right). *The fabric of Modern Orthodoxy is being stretched.*

What About the Next Generation?

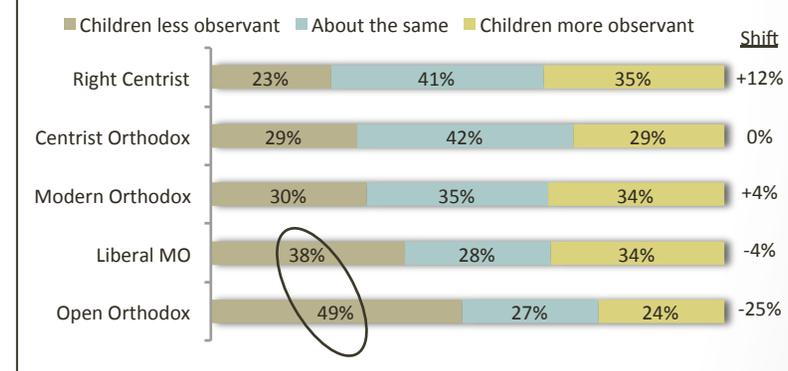
The survey shows that respondents’ children are willing to exercise prerogatives when it comes religion: one-third are less observant than their parents and one-third are more observant. This implies that many Modern Orthodox Jews are likely experiencing some levels of religious changes within their own families, and perhaps this creates an opportunity for people to consider existing attitudes.

Here, again, there are significant differences among denominations, as the liberal segments show a much higher percentage of their children being less observant. *This suggests that polarization will get worse, as well as having implications relating to the number of people leaving Orthodoxy.*

Shifts in Religious Observance Over the Past Decade



Children on “The Left” Are Becoming Much Less Observant



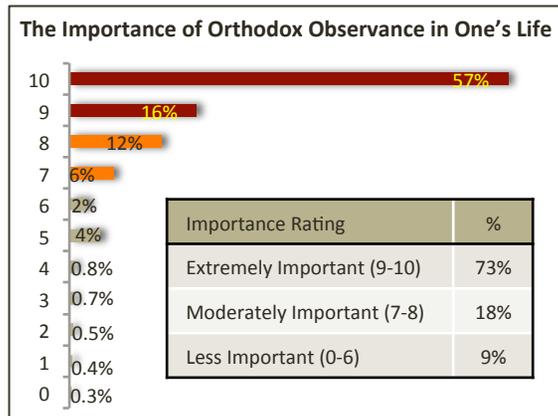
What might greater polarization across Modern Orthodoxy presage? The wide range of identities, beliefs and practices challenges perceptions of near uniformity in normative compliance and may ultimately affect the viability of there being a single camp known as Modern Orthodoxy. In the future, some Orthodox-identifying individuals may well stay within this camp, or they may seek a place in an adjacent “tradition-leaning” community.

* Nishma Research’s “Modern Orthodox - Survey of Those Who Have Left Orthodoxy - July 2016” is available at <http://nishmaresearch.com/social-research.html>.

Summary of Key Findings *(Continued)*

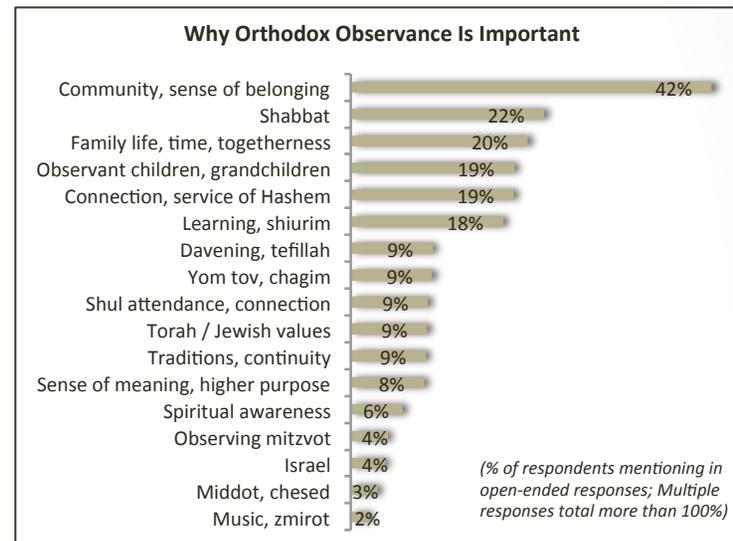
The Importance of Orthodox Observance as a Part of Life

Modern Orthodox Jews see their Orthodox Observance as an extremely important part of their life, with no notable differences between men and women, or by age.

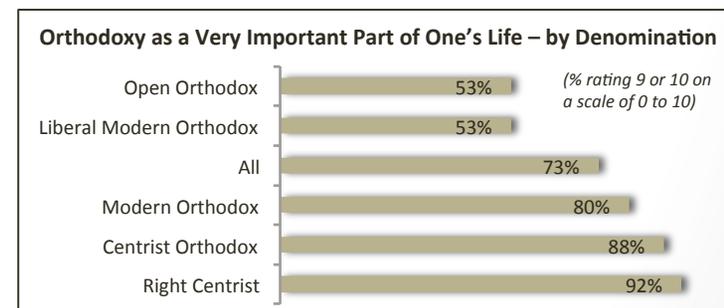


The #1 reason by a wide margin is the sense of community and belonging. Other reasons are Shabbat, family togetherness, seeing observant children, connection to *Hashem* and learning.

Torah Life subsumes many of these components, and the accompanying chart (see upper right) displays what respondents said when they were given the opportunity to explain (in an open-ended question), what gives them the most satisfaction, joy or meaning as Orthodox Jews.



Orthodox observance is a less important part of people's lives at the liberal end of the Modern Orthodox spectrum.



Summary of Key Findings *(Continued)*

How Modern Orthodox Jews Feel About Shul

Shuls are central to Jewishly observant lives, as places of prayer, learning and community. To what extent do Modern Orthodox Jews avail themselves of what shuls offer, and what are the reactions – positive or negative – to the shul environment, policies and practices?

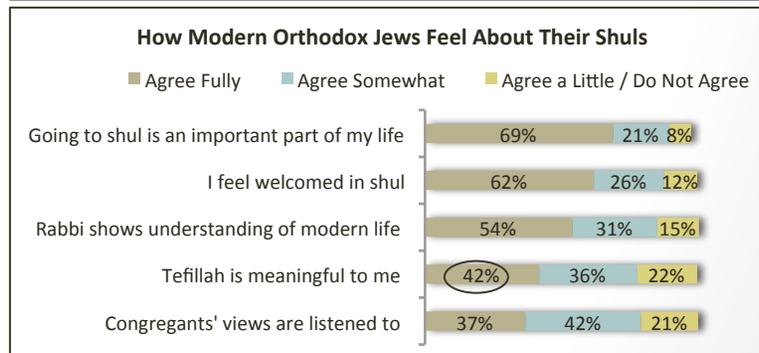
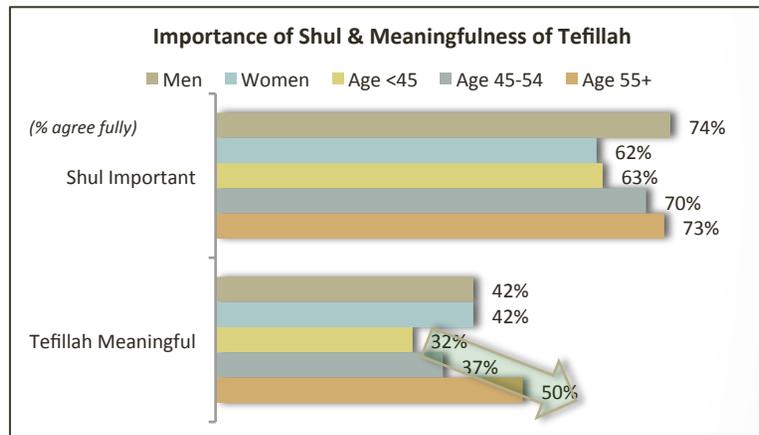
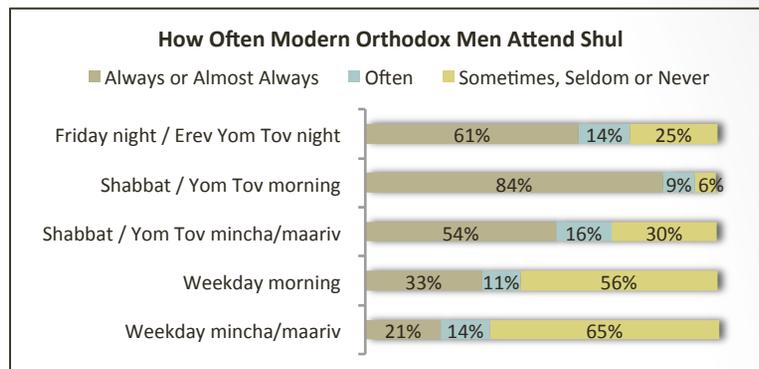
For many, attending shul services is mostly a weekend affair. 84% of men and 52% of women always or almost always attend shul on Shabbat or Yom Tov mornings (few women attend at other times), and 61% of men attend Friday night and Erev Yom Tov night. But men’s attendance during the week is much lower.

While people are comfortable in shul, feel welcomed and more than two-thirds say going to shul is an important part of their lives, *fewer than half (42%) agree fully that the tefillah experience is meaningful to them.*

Men find shul more important than women, although the two genders find *tefillah* of equally middling meaningfulness. *Both importance of shul and meaningfulness of tefillah are lower among the young,* and both rise notably with age. The meaningfulness of *tefillah* rises significantly as we move “to the right” (51% among Centrist and 61% among Right Centrist).

Shul Disconnections?

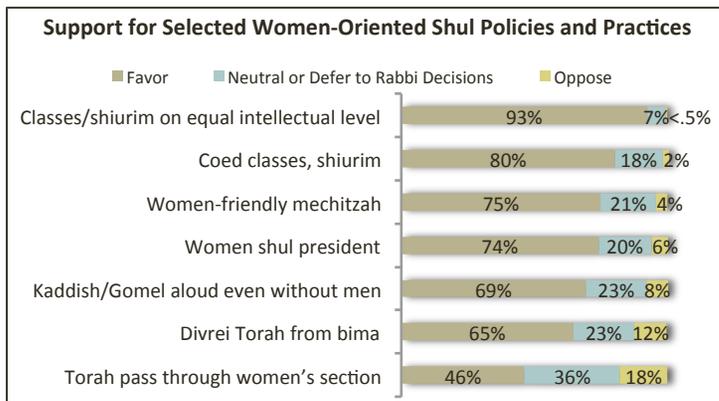
A slight majority (54%) agree fully that their rabbi’s decisions and guidance reflect an understanding of modern life, and fewer than half (37%) agree fully that they are listened to. This suggests that some may feel “disconnection” from their shul and its *hashkafa* (worldview).



Summary of Key Findings *(Continued)*

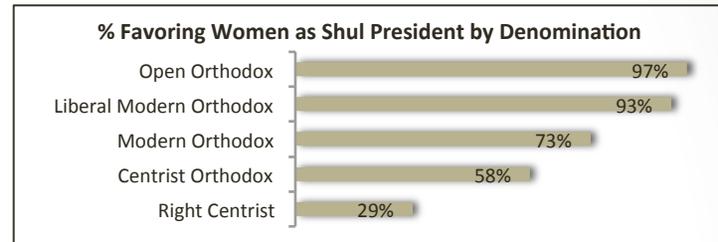
The Role and Status of Women

There is much talk about the role and status of women in shuls, institutions and the community, and there is in fact fairly broad support for a range of women-oriented shul policies and practices. An average of 72% favor the items on a list of seven shul policies and practices (see chart below). However, fewer than half (45% on average) are currently satisfied with where things stand – the progress to date on these policies and practices – in their Orthodox community .



Women as Shul Presidents

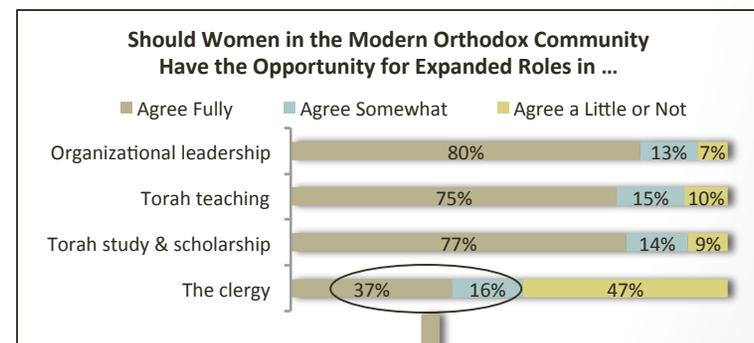
An issue of some recent contention is that of women as shul presidents, and some shuls with women presidents have faced criticism. We find broad support – across nearly all of the Modern Orthodox spectrum – for women as shul presidents. Support is below 50% only among the Right Centrist group.



Overall, nearly three-fourths (74%) favor this, including both men (70%) and women (79%). It is highest among the young (79% for ages 18-34).

Women's Opportunities for Other Expanded Roles

Beyond shul presidencies, we solicited views regarding women's opportunities for broader expanded roles, and found strong agreement that women should have the opportunity for expanded roles in organizational leadership, Torah teaching, and Torah study and scholarship.



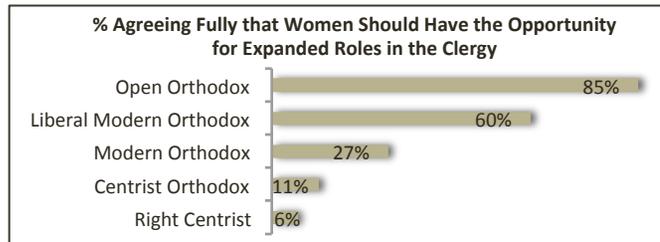
53% Agree Fully or Somewhat → Continued

Summary of Key Findings (Continued)

Views on Expanded Women’s Roles in the Clergy ... and What About Women “Rabbis”?

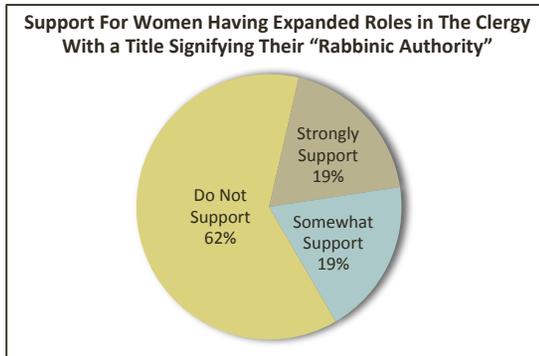
The preceding page showed that 53% of respondents believe that women in their Orthodox community should have the opportunity for expanded roles in the clergy; 37% agree fully and 16% agree somewhat.

The percentage agreeing fully is higher among women (43%) than men (31%), and much higher among women age 18-34 (52%). Support varies quite widely across the denominations.

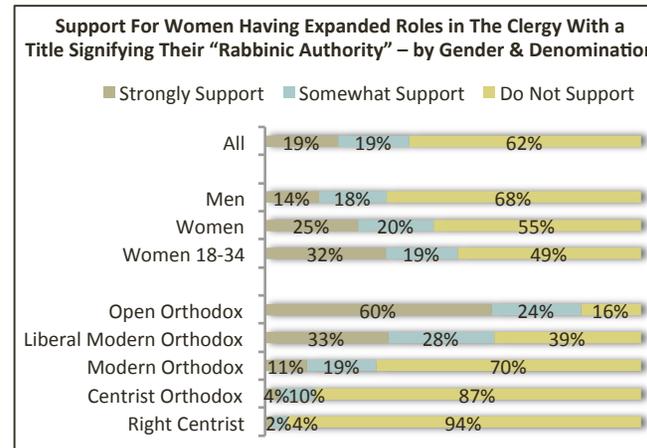


A follow-up question asked if they believe MO women with a role in the clergy should also have a “title signifying their ‘rabbinic authority.’” We did not suggest any specific title (e.g., *rabba*, *maharat*, etc.).

19% of all respondents strongly support Orthodox women in the clergy with a title, and an additional 19% somewhat support the concept (see definitions and methodology on page 49 of the full report).



Here we see differences in support by gender (women support this more than men, 25% vs. 14% ... and 32% among women ages 18-34). But the most striking differences are among the denominations.



The concept of women clergy with a title has 60% support among Open Orthodox, 33% among Liberal Modern Orthodox and 11% among Modern Orthodox. Support drops into the low single digits for the right-most denominations. This is the issue with greatest divide between left and right, no matter where the “dividing line” is placed.

	Open Orthodox	vs.	The 4 Right-Most Denominations
% Strongly Support	60%		14%

	Open & Liberal MO	vs.	The 3 Right-Most Denominations
% Strongly Support	42%		8%

Summary of Key Findings *(Continued)*

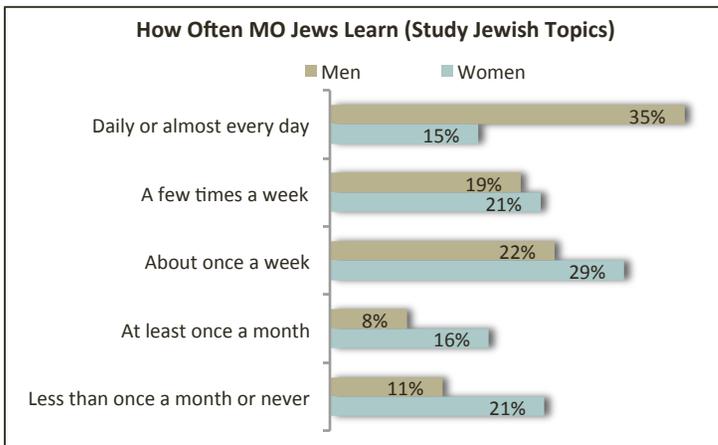
Jewish Study and Learning

Adult Backgrounds and Learning

Modern Orthodox Jews have strong religious educational backgrounds: 47% have had post-high school yeshiva and/or advanced study (54% of men and 39% of women). Younger generations are more educated (68% of those ages 18-34 have had post-high school yeshiva and/or advanced study vs. 54% for ages 35-54 and 30% for ages 55+).

MO Jews take Jewish study and learning seriously, with men on average learning a few times a week and women once a week. Among those who learn, 43% of men learn *gemara* or *daf yomi*, and 10% of women do so. Other topics (*Parsha*, *Tanach*, *halacha*, *mussar* or Jewish issues relating to the modern world) are learned more equally by men and women.

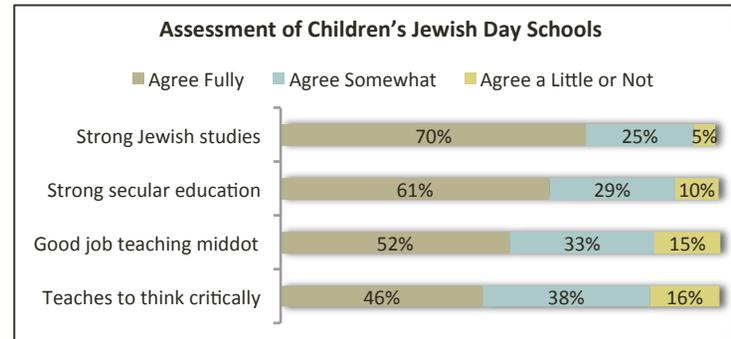
The survey gathered a substantial amount of feedback on what topics interest people (sample responses on page 54 of the full report).



Children’s Education

83% of respondents’ children in grades 1-12 attend an Orthodox Jewish day school, and 75% of the schools are either fully (45%) or partially (30%) coeducational.

Schools are rated generally well – a bit stronger, though, for Jewish studies (70% agree fully) than for secular education (61% agree fully).



Elementary schools (grades 1-8) and high schools are rated equally for their Jewish studies, but high schools are better for secular studies.

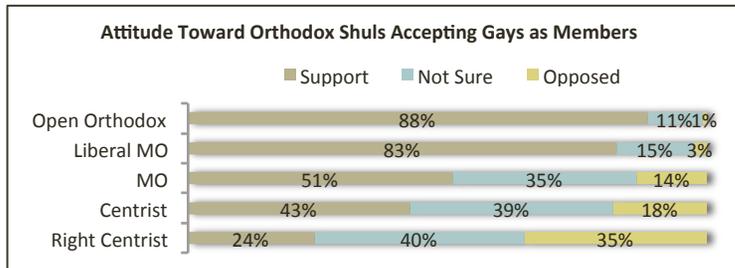
Some the other attributes rated were whether schools encourage college (92% agree fully), teach students to think critically (46%), meet special education needs (32%), teach *tzniut* (modest behavior) (22%) and sex education (22%) – the last two items were asked of parents of age-appropriate students.

Summary of Key Findings *(Continued)*

Sexuality ... A Trend Toward More Open Attitudes

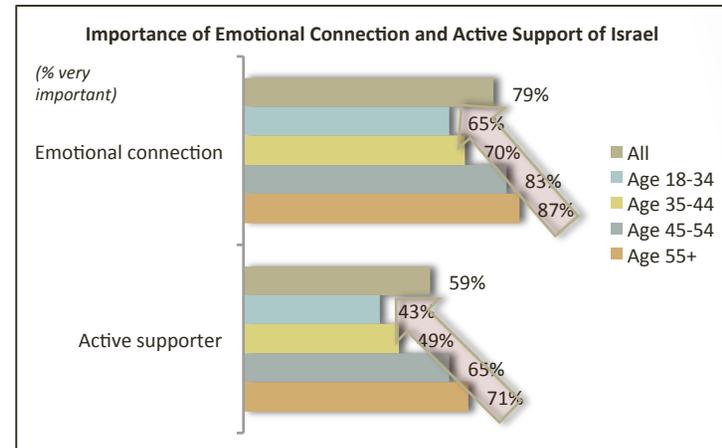
U.S. society has experienced a shift toward greater acceptance of gays. Since a tenet of Modern Orthodoxy is interaction with secular society, it is interesting to see if the secular society attitudes have permeated Modern Orthodoxy. In fact, MO has similarly become more open to gays. Overall, 58% support Orthodox shuls in general accepting gays as members with 12% opposed (29% are not sure).

About one-third have used sex education counseling or information resources, more often using secular than Jewish-g geared resources.



Connections to Israel

Overall, 79% say their emotional connection to Israel is very important, and 59% say it is important for them to actively support Israel. But both (emotional connections and support) are much lower below age 45.



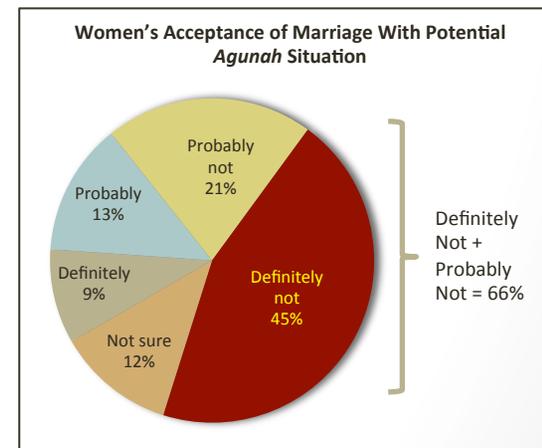
Divorce and Agunot

To see how knowledgeable people are, the survey presented five "halachic statements" relating to Jewish divorce (some were correct and some were not). Overall, an average of 71% correctly understand *halachot* about a *get*, remarriage, etc.

Among marrieds, 83% of men and 73% of women say they were aware at the time of their marriage of the conditions around the practice of a *get*.

There has been much publicity in recent years of the *agunah* problem, with the result that two-thirds of women, if they were to marry in an Orthodox ceremony, would not agree to an arrangement in which they could become an *agunah* if their husband did not grant a *get*.

85% of all respondents say they would definitely prefer that a close female relative of theirs, if to be married, would obtain a *halachic* pre-nuptial agreement.



Summary of Key Findings *(Continued)*

Modern Orthodox Successes and Opportunities

Successes

Modern Orthodoxy well achieves its goal of melding the observant Jewish lifestyle with participation in modern society. There are aspects of Modern Orthodoxy that are generally working notably well and may provide examples for the broader community:

- There are strong levels of belief, observance and a very powerful sense of community ... and overall religious observance is becoming *stronger*.
- Levels of Shabbat observance are very high, and respondents greatly value Shabbat for the family connectedness it fosters and for providing a needed break from day-to-day activities.
- Shuls are vibrant and well-attended centers of prayer, learning and community.
- There is a strong focus on Jewish education, both for children – including very high Jewish day school enrollment, a key driver of Jewish continuity – and for adults.
- There is much interest in and study of Jewish topics, and desires to explore an array of topics relating to Torah study as well as Judaism in the modern world.
- There is great value seen in education (61% achieve post-graduate or professional degrees, with commensurately high family incomes) and in participating in society.
- There is much satisfaction and joy in seeing the transmission of Jewish values and practices to children and grandchildren.
- There are strong emotional and activist connections in support of Israel.
- There has been growth in opportunities for women leadership in communal roles, as well as Torah teaching, study and scholarship.

Opportunities

At the same time, there are opportunities to strengthen the community by building upon what is currently in place. For example:

- There are high levels of observance of *tefillah* – Jewish prayer – but many do not find it to be very meaningful. There is room for creativity in making tefillah more meaningful for more people.
- Jewish study is highly valued, and respondents provided a very wide range of suggestions for additional topics of interest.
- There has been growth and acceptance of women in *halachic* roles, and that of the *yoetzet halachah* has been particularly well-received and heavily utilized in communities where available.
- There has been some growth and acceptance of women on shul clergy staffs. While issues relating to such positions and how they are defined still need to be resolved, there are many within Modern Orthodoxy that value this in some form.
- The *halachic* prenuptial agreement has gained acceptance as a way to mitigate the *agunah* problem, and efforts to further its use would be beneficial.
- There is a strong base of education on topics relating to both *bein adam l'makom* (relationships with Hashem) and *bein adam l'chaveiro* (relationships with other people). Given the communal aspects that people cite as problems, there are opportunities to reinforce teachings relating to the latter.
- This Profile of American Modern Orthodox Jews shows many areas where differences exist across the spectrum of Modern Orthodoxy. While there are issues that have created divisions, we hope that this study and others will ultimately help to promote respectful dialogue across denominations, spur our community to find commonalities, and help find ways to reconcile differences.

Summary of Key Findings *(Continued)*

The Biggest Problems Facing Modern Orthodoxy

Respondents were presented with 27 issues facing Modern Orthodoxy, and asked to assess which ones they saw as serious problems.

Overall, finances are seen as the biggest problem. By a wide margin, the cost of Jewish schooling ranks as the #1 problem, and also among the top 10 are the cost of maintaining a Jewish home (#4) and the adequacy of funds to meet community needs (#10).

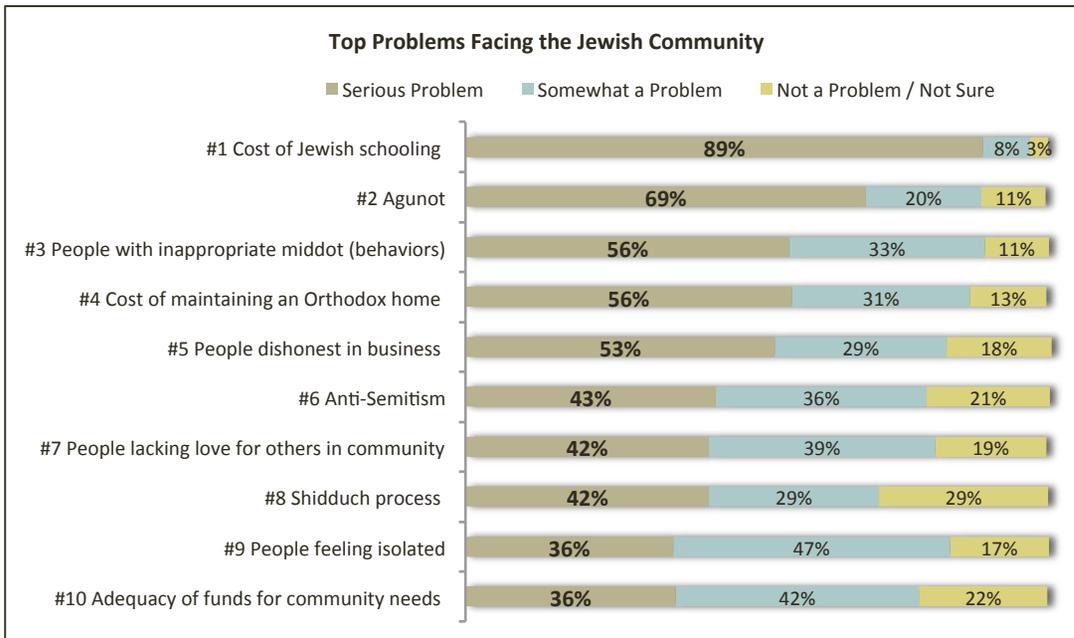
The highly-publicized *agunah* issue ranks as the #2 problem. Several other of the top problems involve interpersonal behaviors, including #3 - religious people not dealing with others with appropriate middot (proper behaviors); #5 - religious people being dishonest in business;

and #7 - people lacking love for others in the community.

There is general consistency of views across gender and age, with a few nominal variations.

Across all issues, women are slightly more concerned on average than men; and the younger (18-34) and older (65%+) are more concerned than those ages 35-64.

There are substantial variations in overall levels of concern across the denominations, with the “right” (Centrist / Right Centrist) groups expressing generally more concern across the 27 issues than the “left” (Open Orthodox / Liberal Modern Orthodox) groups.



The Rest of the List
(Issues Ranked #11-27 Overall)

Rank	Issue	Serious
11	Observant lifestyle but little spiritual meaning	34%
12	Availability of special needs education	33%
13	Rabbis opposed to increased women’s roles	32%
14	Needs of the elderly	29%
15	Raising children with religious Jewish values	28%
16	Substance abuse	26%
17	Day school / yeshiva admission policies	26%
18	Rising divorce rates	25%
19	Physical or mental abuse	25%
20	People leaving Orthodoxy	25%
21	Poverty	25%
22	People not committed enough to religious growth	23%
23	Technological and cultural threats	20%
24	Modern Orthodoxy becoming less observant	19%
25	Not enough outreach/ kiruv	18%
26	Modern Orthodoxy becoming more observant	16%
27	Rabbis advocating for increased women’s roles	7%