

# Anne Kahan Transcript

Shayna Rhodes: Hello. I'm sitting in the home of Anne Kahan (kah-HAHN) on February...

Anne Kahan: 2nd.

SR: – 2nd, 2005.

AK: I say Kahan (KAY-han), but it's all right.

SR: Kahan?

AK: Yeah.

SR: Kahan.

AK: Okay.

SR: We're going to discuss Anne's adult bat mitzvah. Okay. So, let's start with family and your background. Want to tell me about your family when you were a child? Do you have any siblings?

AK: Yes, I was the fifth of six children. I had three sisters and two brothers.

SR: And where did you grow up?

AK: I grew up in – well, I lived in Belgium. I was born in Belgium, and I lived there with my parents and my siblings until I was a little older than five. Then the Germans invaded Belgium, and we left, we fled, and we headed towards America. We left in May, and by the end of the summer, we were already in America. We went to France first, and then to England. My mother was English. My father was born in France, but Belgian, really. All the children were born in Belgium. My parents lived in Belgium, and then they left at the

very beginning of the war. We went first to France, and then the Germans were following. So we went to England because my mother had English papers; that helped us. We stayed in England briefly, but then they were bombing in England, so we managed to come to America. My father had a brother who was already here. He sent us papers so that we could come. Then we moved to America.

SR: Were any of your extended family left behind?

AK: No, we were very fortunate. I mean, I'm sure we lost people probably from the extended family. But the nuclear family, plus my two grandmothers, made it out, and we were very lucky. Plus, other relatives. We sort of went as a group with some other relatives, but most of those stayed in England because they had originally come from England. But then we only stayed in England maybe two months.

SR: Do you remember anything about your Jewish life in Belgium, or is that going too far back?

AK: No, I don't remember, but I know that my family was Orthodox. We attended an Orthodox shul. I can't tell you anything about it because I don't remember that. My brothers went to day school. My older brother went to day school. I'm not sure what – I

have older sisters. I'm not sure whether – I think they went to regular school, not day school, but I'm not sure about them.

SR: And how about you?

AK: When we came to America – that I remember, in terms of religious life. We lived first in Riverdale for about four years, a little less than four years, and then we moved to Midtown Manhattan. We lived actually on West 95th Street, and my parents were active in Ohab Zedek, which is now known as OZ. Anyhow, I remember very, very distinctly going to shul there. I was involved in junior congregation when I was a little kid; I was nine, ten, eleven – that age. I remember going there and davening with the junior congregation, and singing, and enjoying it very much. I don't remember feeling left out or not part of it. I don't think little girls led the service; I think it was boys, but I'm not sure of that. But certainly, we sang and participated, and that's where I learned to daven [pray] essentially. I liked being there. I had Hebrew lessons, private lessons first, when I was a kid, at home, somebody came; and then, later on, I went to Hebrew school.

SR: Which Hebrew school?

AK: Beth Hillel, which was on the block. The Talmud Torah, not day school.

SR: Not day school.

AK: My younger brother went to day school, but it had just begun. At the time, when I started first grade or second grade, it didn't – first, I went to public school in Riverdale, and then we moved to Manhattan. But they didn't have that day school yet. My brother went to Manhattan Day School. So by the time he started, I was already in fourth grade or something like that, and I went to public school. But then I went to Hebrew Talmud Torah after school and eventually to (Herzliah?). I got a Jewish education, probably not a great one.

SR: And you went to shul [inaudible]?

AK: I went to shul regularly. I remember very specifically going with my mother. I sat in the balcony. I remember very specifically looking down to see what's going on. I was very curious. I was a very active little girl, and I was very curious about everything. I remember very well that I was wearing a little Scottish tam, a little brown hat, and I looked down, and the hat fell down – I was mortified, I was very embarrassed – into the men's section. But I think that that's where it all began; my quest to be part of it or to see what was going on, or to know what was going on was very... My mother was, I think, quite traditional. She never worked outside the home. There were six kids. It was a lot, and when we came to America, we had to start all over again, in terms of – financially, it was hard. My father had to hustle. I think there was difference in the way girls and boys

were treated at home. I mean, we believed that it was important for girls to daven. It wasn't that you don't have to bother with this. I remember my mother davening in the morning and evening. I mean, at night, I think she just said Shema, but I remember every day that she davened.

SR: Did she cover her hair? Did she wear a wig?

AK: No. She did in Belgium. But when we came here, she shed it; she didn't after that. But she certainly considered – I mean, they were Orthodox and never questioned of how, where...

SR: Did you ever go into the men's section with your father when you were real little?

AK: Probably, but when we first came – I don't remember that in Belgium. Probably. When we came here, I was already five, so I probably was – maybe in the beginning, but I don't...

SR: But your brothers had bar mitzvahs?

AK: Yes. That I remember clearly. I don't remember my – I have a brother who's no longer living. I don't remember his bar mitzvah because I was a good bit younger than he was. I don't even know if – let me think. I must have been alive, but I don't remember his. But I remember my younger brother because I was closest – the youngest is a brother. He was a little more than three years younger than I was, so we were very close. I remember his bar mitzvah and all the gifts and all the fuss, and I didn't like that at all. He got a bicycle, which was a big deal, especially for us because we didn't have a lot of money. There was a big fuss made. I also remember him learning the parshah and singing it again and again, and I learned it. I mean, I could do it then. Yeah, I think it was – it never occurred to me on one level, but on the other hand, I think I was annoyed or jealous that it hadn't happened, and I wasn't aware that anywhere – I don't know if there was. I'm not sure in terms of the Conservative movement or women being active – it hadn't come into my view yet, or my outlook.

SR: Did you ask your mother about it?

AK: No.

SR: No.

AK: No. I don't remember it. No. I remember growing up and being active in a young collegiate Jewish organization and in a Zionist Organization for women, a women's organization, but the young collegiate or pre-college group was boys and girls. I mean, we didn't daven together, but we met on Friday nights, we had [inaudible] Shabbat and stuff like that. I don't remember feeling left out. I certainly was involved in Jewish life always.

SR: Did you have any role models as a child? Women or men?

AK: There were some teachers, both secular teachers, and Hebrew teachers, whom I admired. I had a very good Hebrew teacher. I went to an afternoon Bais Yaakov school, which sort of amazes everyone now when I think about it.

SR: I went to Bais Yaakov school.

AK: Yeah? So I went to – I went to Bais Yaakov first, and then I went to Herzliah, which was non-affiliated. One of the teachers at Bais Yaakov had an influence. And I had friends who – I don't remember any particular role model in terms of Jewish women. I can't say I remember somebody. Although, I will say that when I was – I mean, I'm skipping way ahead, but when I was forty, my mother died. I wanted very much to have



a women's minyan. I wanted to sit Shiva, and I wanted to have a women's minyan, so I could say Kaddish. At that time, it didn't occur to me that I could say Kaddish in a mixed minyan, but I really wanted to say Kaddish, and I wanted to be the one to say it. And (Aviva?) had to arrange it for me, (Aviva Bakk?), my cousin, and she had a friend, Serene Victor, who you must know.

SR: Lives on my block.

AK: We speak of influence. Serene came to my house, and she led the davening, and she had her daughter in her arms; she had a baby that was about nine months old. That's the daughter who's married now. It was such a powerful thing for me to see this young woman, who could daven and lead the davening, holding a baby girl. I mean the whole – for my mother. So that feminine – it was very potent and it really sort of was a [tremendous] – I must have already had leanings there because I knew I wanted to say Kaddish. I knew I wanted to have my own minyan. So I must have already been somewhere on that path, but that image was very, very strong, and that whole feeling of this was the right thing. We were mourning my mother, and she was a woman, and here was this woman leading it with her baby daughter. I mean, it was just very, very inspiring.

SR: What year was that?

AK: That must've been. I was born in '34. Must have been about '74 – '73, '74 – somewhere around there – '75, in there. By that time, I had kids. We had one daughter and two sons. The first child is a girl. She's living in Israel. I was very aware of feminism already. I'd read all the books and attended meetings. I didn't have a support group, but I was very involved with – or very aware of the whole trend here in this country, the '60s and '70s, the Women's Movement, and all that – Betty Friedan, all those things.

SR: At that time, women were not saying Kaddish in Orthodox synagogues?

AK: They're not saying it yet. They're saying it, but they're only being responded to if a man is saying it.

SR: Really?

AK: Oh, yeah. I know a lot of people who had a very tough time with this, who felt like they were being [inaudible]. Oh, yeah. At most Orthodox shuls that I know of – I can't give a general statement, but at most Orthodox shuls that I know of, if a woman is saying Kaddish and there's no man saying it, a man, the Gabbai or somebody, there will say it so that people can respond. That's what happens at the [inaudible]. I have a friend who

lost her mother and went for a whole year every day, and that's what Rabbi Twerski, at the time, said. I think that's what happens at Young Israel. I don't think that if a woman is the only one saying Kaddish in an Orthodox shul, there'll be a response. There are usually other people, so it doesn't become an issue, except it does become an issue because the woman feels slighted. I know a lot of people who have had a very hard time with that.

SR: I don't think I was aware of that. That was too subtle for me because I [inaudible] leading the man [inaudible].

AK: Yeah. I know a lot of people who had a very – and that year is a very difficult year anyhow. I think a lot of feelings are stirred up with that.

SR: So, talk about your college years. You say you left home.

AK: My college years – I went to City College, so I lived at home. I had friends, not only but mostly in the Orthodox circles. I had friends in school that were not Jewish, were not [Orthodox], but most of my friends were religious, and my family was religious. I really don't know. It's interesting because the girls – there were four daughters and two sons. The girls are the ones who maintain the religion. My brothers are not – one is no longer

living, but they're not identified. I mean, they identify as Jews and certainly connected, but they didn't go to shul; they didn't keep kosher and all that. I have a younger brother, the younger one, and he lives in Texas. He doesn't keep anything. He knows about the holidays because he went to day school, and he goes for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, stuff like that. But on a day-to-day level, he's not – but when we have [inaudible] stuff like that, he asks me to remind him, and then he'll light a candle. I mean, he knows how to say – but he doesn't make a point of going to shul. I don't think he hardly ever goes to shul. So whether that was because they had an issue with – not in terms of religion so much as with my father about there being only room for one male in the house – I'm not sure what the dynamics or the psychodynamics were. I don't think it was primarily a religious issue. But the fact is that they didn't become involved with the religion, either of them. Whereas the girls – the women now – all remained with varying degrees. I have a sister who's in Israel, whose older than I am, eleven years older, who taught Hebrew school all her life in America, and then finally made aliyah and now teaches English. She's already over eighty, but she's the oldest teacher, and she's learned all her life. She's a very learned woman and a very individualistic woman but certainly considers herself – she doesn't buy this feminist stuff. She doesn't buy the egalitarian – she's interested in it. She's very scholarly. She knows a lot. She has attended [inaudible] and classes all her life and still does. On Friday night, if you sit at her table, she's just as liable to give a (d'var?) as somebody [else]. She doesn't consider herself at all a second-class citizen, and she says she doesn't want to have to get up for minyan. So she bought into it, let's say, but at the same time, she's very much her own person. She davens, and she's observant, but she doesn't have an issue with it, whereas I had a major issue with it. I have another sister, who has turned away because of – who has turned away and then come closer again, but because of the feminist issues [is] very angry – because of the women's issues. So the way it played out with her was she turned away altogether, and now has come back in terms of – she's studies Hebrew. It came back in terms of – she's smart. She knows Hebrew. She speaks. She

reads. Now she's involved. She's somewhat involved in the Conservative shul in Washington.

SR: DC?

AK: In DC. Yeah. She sort of picks and chooses what she wants to do and what she doesn't want to do. Whereas I feel much more committed now than I ever was, and I'm much more aware of the days and the month and when is Rosh Chodesh and what's the parshah. It's made a tremendous impact on me. It's changed my life, being a part of a minyan and becoming part of the religion, or becoming an active participant; let's put it that way. Not being part – I always was a part. I don't know. I don't know how it would have worked out. When my kids were growing up, they went to Schechter first and then to Maimonides. At least, the boys did that. My daughter went to Schechter, and then she finished – at that time, Schechter only went through sixth – and then she went to Brookline Public Schools, and we didn't send her to day school. I still don't know why. She doesn't either. But my kids are much more observant than I am. I don't know [if they're] more observant. They're more traditional – let's put it that way – or they're more Orthodox. I don't know what you want to call it. I think I'm probably more observant now than I was before. But in terms of where I stand on the spectrum, it's not where my kids [are]. I mean, it's very different.

SR: Let's talk about when you started to change. You began to become more feminist.

You read Betty Friedan, and then what happened?

AK: Alright. I used to go – my husband and my family belonged to Young Israel – my husband, my kids.

SR: In Brookline?

AK: In Brookline. I used to go. Then about – let me think – the early '70s, I guess, or late '60s, I started not going. I could get very angry and very upset. “How come these little boys get called up? The boys do all of everything, and the girls don't do anything. They just watch.” I didn't like sitting in the back, and I didn't like the passive role that I felt was assigned to women, and there was no opportunity to be part of it. I got angrier and angrier. I really had a very difficult time.

SR: What years were these?

AK: It was like '65. My youngest child was born in 1965. So the first few years – that period I remember very well – I didn't go to shul because I couldn't take [inaudible] shul. I

couldn't push the [carriage]. I don't know whether it was because of the carriage. I think, at the time, we pushed the carriage even though we didn't carry – at that time, people who observed still pushed carriages even without an –

SR: Eruv.

AK: – eruv. I didn't go to shul because I didn't take the kid to shul. That was the excuse for me. So stayed home with him, and that was fine. And then, as he began to get to be four, five and started going with his father to shul, I realized I had this – but I was very angry, and it was very tough for me. So I started going – I was in my thirties. I started going not every week. Then there was a period of years where I just didn't go at all, and I was very angry. The whole thing, the whole religion, made me very angry. I was very angry at men. I was very angry at the role of women. I couldn't come to terms with it. If I would go to shul, I'd get very upset, and if I didn't go to shul, I felt that I was cutting off my nose to spite my face because what I was doing was getting the table ready and making a nice lunch for Shabbat, and I didn't have any of the spiritual qualities. I was doing just the women's work. I was very upset with it. Then I went through a phase where I enjoyed the time to myself. I was working. I always worked when my kids were little, either full-time – mostly part-time until later on. I was a school psychologist. I got to the point where I would stay home, and I would read, and I would go for a walk around the reservoir, or take a long bath, and sort of indulge myself in myself. But it wasn't very satisfying. For a while, it was, and then I was missing something, and I was very angry a lot of the time. I didn't know quite where to go or what to do. I went for the Yamim Noraim and stuff like that, but a lot of [inaudible] I didn't go, and if I went on Shabbos, I

would come home so angry, it wasn't worth it. I was mad – angry at my husband. It was just miserable.

SR: There were no [inaudible] at that time, were there?

AK: No. Not that I know. I don't think so.

SR: Was there anything available?

AK: Because they started at Shaarei Tefillah, they had [inaudible] Torah. First time I went there, I walked, and I went there. There was talk about it. They were starting.

SR: What year was that? Do you know?

AK: You'll have to ask Shaarei when they had – but I know I went the first time. It's probably somewhere in the '70s.



SR: Really?

AK: Yeah. Yeah, for [inaudible] Torah. Maybe it was late '70s or early '80s. But that was new. There weren't these women's tefillah groups yet that I knew of. At least, not here. I had no desire to go to a Conservative shul. That's still an issue for me because that had always been "they" and not "us," and I couldn't see myself – I still don't call myself Conservative. I could go to KI [Kehillath Israel?] twice a week in the morning to daven, but I'm not a member. It was difficult for me because it was like that doesn't count. I don't know. I don't know what. But it had been so ingrained. It also didn't feel right. I don't know. I didn't give it a chance, but it just was too foreign.

SR: Other?

AK: Too other. Yeah, very.

SR: But in your home, you kept mostly Orthodox traditional laws – Shabbat and kashrut.

AK: Yeah, yeah. Kashrut, mikvah, all that pretty much. My husband came from an

Orthodox background. He came from a Hasidic background almost. We brought up the kids with the Orthodox traditions [and] values. Actually, aside from my issue with it, or my problem with it, it was a very positive force in our home. The kids were very interested. Dov would learn with them and me. We'd sit around the table. I remember on Shabbat, for a while, we had a Mishnah group that we learned with him. It was very positive, and Shabbat was very nice. We always had guests. I remember Shabbat at home being very positive. I mean, aside from the shul, which at that time was not an issue for me, we had a lot of guests. It also depends on the person's perception because my brothers remember that was endless sitting at the table. They didn't like it at all. Same table and I remember it as being positive that we sat around, we sang z'miros, and it was very, very nice. It was a nice part of the week. It certainly was in my own home. I mean, I enjoyed it. The kids were very much involved in helping, and we tried to teach them values. I think we were successful in that. There were no major problems with them acting out or not wanting to be or questioning. So that wasn't the issue. But as they got older, it was becoming more and more of a problem for me until I found Minyan Shaleym.

SR: So what happened between [inaudible] Torah at Shaarei and Minyan Shaleym?  
That was a while.

AK: That was a while. Yeah.

SR: So [inaudible] what happened?

AK: I don't know. There was a long time where I just didn't go, maybe a ten-year period.

SR: You started going to Minyan Shaleym. That was your first experience. Can you describe Minyan Shaleym for me?

AK: Yeah. Minyan Shaleym is – it's hard to describe. It's a group of people who share certain values, societal and social, and social conscious, who are really interested in praying together, who come from various places on their observance spectrum and on the knowledge spectrum. So we have people who are just coming into it or people who are coming back to it. You have people who know a lot and people who know very little. You have people who observe most of the mitzvahs and people who observe very little. But the minyan, as a whole, is more traditional than the members, than the individual members. There's a great range of acceptance for a wide variety of practice. People ride, people come by car, people turn on lights, do all kinds of – but the minyan doesn't. So the standard of the minyan is pretty strict. By right, one is not supposed to put on the lights if one comes in and the lights are on. Some people occasionally do it because – but we're supposed to leave the lights on. We daven all in Hebrew. We read the whole parshah every week. In that sense, it was very comfortable for me. It wasn't davening in English. It wasn't sitting on the floor and playing guitar. It wasn't touchy-feely. I mean, some of the people – there [was] a lot of kissing going on and stuff, but it wasn't way out

for me. It certainly fit in terms of the davening. I felt very comfortable; there was complete – the seating issue had not really been my issue. I didn't like sitting in the back, and I didn't like non-participant – but if we had had, in the shuls I went to, separate seating, that would have not – because I'd grown up with separate seating. So that wasn't an issue for me.

SR: So there's no mechitza?

AK: There's no mechitza; men and women sit together.

SR: Totally egalitarian service.

AK: Totally egalitarian.

SR: Is there a rabbi?

AK: No. That's the other thing I like. There's no rabbi. [inaudible] apologies.

SR: That's quite all right.

AK: There's no rabbi. Sometimes that becomes an issue if you have a question or something.

SR: What do you do if you have a question?

AK: I don't know. It's still a question. Sometimes people go to Rabbi Hamilton. We don't have anybody who [inaudible], but what we do do is – for instance, we tell people, "You cannot bring food unless you have a kosher home. But you can buy things with the" – and people stick to that. So I feel comfortable with that, in the sense that I wouldn't like to go to a place where they would serve a kiddush, and it wasn't kosher. I've been to that, but not in my shul. In that sense, I feel very comfortable. Some of the homes we go to are not severely kosher. That sometimes becomes a problem. But the level of observance is strict, or the level of what the minyan does, as opposed to what the individuals do, and that's a nice combination. There are enough people who know and are knowledgeable. The fact that the things that are stressed are more the davening – people come for social reasons, as well, but they don't socialize during the davening.

The davening is very quiet and serious. That I like. And they don't come to show off their new outfits and things like that. It's very supportive. People are very supportive to each other, very warm. I found it very welcoming. It was a total revelation for me because of the fact that women were doing all the things they were doing.

SR: All the jobs rotate?

AK: Yeah. People volunteer to be – there are three jobs per week; one is a steerer, one is a set-up person, and one is the davening coordinator. The davening coordinator arranges to get all the daveners and the leyners. So we don't have one person leyning; usually, we have seven, but the davening coordinator arranges that beforehand. Somebody says [inaudible], somebody else says [inaudible], somebody else [inaudible]. It's a lot of singing. It's very nice. Some people think it's not enough singing, not spontaneous enough. Sometimes I find it goes a little too – it's long. It takes a long time. If you come on time, which most people don't, then if you finish [at] 12:15 or 12:30, it's like, "Come on already. Let's get out of here." I find myself on edge by that time. If you come for your kavanah at 11:30, then you're singing strong at 12:30, but I've been there since – I want to go home. Then, the fact that it's in conflict with my husband's schedule, my family's schedule because they go to Young Israel, or Dov goes to the rebbe in the morning and hashkama minyan; he's home by nine o'clock. So those kinds of things are an issue. On the other hand, I've met a whole lot of people that are – in the beginning, it was very strange because I was much older than everybody there, by far. I mean, most people are in their twenties, and I was already in my fifties. They were younger than my kids were. I was older than their parents. Somebody said to me,

"You're like the den mother here" – an older person my age who came once. But then gradually, it became – and it was mostly singles. It was a very young group. There were some young marrieds, but it was really very young, and in that sense, I felt a little silly. On the other hand, the compensations were so great. Then gradually, it became a little – people got a little older, some married, and also some other people came who are older than the mean. Then, a couple came who were older than I was, [laughter] so that was very nice for me. I'm still much, much older than most of the people there. But now they're [in their] thirties and their forties – people in their thirties and forties, not just in their twenties.

SR: How did you first hear about it?

AK: What happened was I used to go to Young Israel for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. I went to Young Israel; I still belonged. Somewhere along the line, I think before I found Minyan Shaleym, I took my name off the mailing list. I really [inaudible] it. My husband's a member; I am not a member. It was really a point for me. I'm very strong on these things. I don't like things being addressed to "Mr. and Mrs." – I would send them back. But just the whole thing. So these still are issues for me. What was the –? Sorry.

SR: How you first heard about Minyan Shaleym?

AK: Oh, it was in *The Advocate*; it was advertised. I didn't know it from somebody. I had a friend – I was a school psychologist. I had a friend who was also a psychologist who just passed away last year, but a very nice, very nice woman. She became more affiliated with her religion through me, and because she saw what we did and we invited her to our house for Sukkot – we had a sukkah. As a matter of fact, she and her husband turned the house into a kosher house, not because then we could eat there, but because she just felt it was right. It was very interesting. We had a lot of influence on each other. I used to drive with her to work sometimes. We worked in the public school system. She saw how angry I was and how bitter I was. She said, "You've got to find something. You've got to find a place to go." I knew that because, at some point, staying home on Shabbos morning was not doing it for me. At the same time, I could not go to shul because I would just get too upset and too angry. The other thing is I don't know how this would have – if this had happened earlier in my life, how it would have played out in terms of my kids because our friends were Orthodox, we were an Orthodox family, and the questions of who you invite to your house – all these kind of things. The kids went to day school, and I wasn't going to make a big fuss about that or carry on. First, they went to Schechter because I liked it better in terms of the Hebrew, but then we switched to Maimonides, and they got a good education, but they were very strictly observant. The home is still strictly observant and was. We didn't turn on the lights. We didn't cook on – all the things. We would observe by keeping Shabbat and things like that.

SR: Tell me about your first time in Minyan Shaleyem. Do you remember?



AK: A little bit. I don't remember the very first time, but I remember going there. At that time, it was not in the building it is now; it was in an apartment, big apartment.

SR: Do you know what year that was?

AK: Yes, I can tell you in a minute. I'll go back. Say, sixteen years ago. Because one of the people who's now in Newton – do you know Jeff Remz?

SR: Sure.

AK: He was a member of Minyan Shaleym, and he was here. His daughter Yamit was about eight months old, nine months old. She's about sixteen now, I think.

SR: Yeah, I went to her bar mitzvah about two years ago.

AK: All right. So it's about sixteen years ago. So that's what? [inaudible] let's say. Yeah,

about 1990, maybe '89, somewhere around there.

SR: He used to still walk down, I remember

AK: Yes. In the beginning, he walked down. He was terrific, by the way. He made me feel very welcome, and it made a big difference because some people don't talk to a new person, and he was very good. Shortly after I started coming, he said, "You got to be davening coordinator; that's how you get to know people." I went, "Oh, not me. I'm scared. I don't know anybody. I'm shy." He said, "That's how you'll get to know people." And I did. And that's how I got – by getting involved. So the first time I went – I don't know – it was a lot of singing. It was certainly less formal than I was used to. But the davening was straight. Maybe a little more casual in terms of – I don't think we should have a dress code, but it's still an issue for me because when people come in jeans or something, I think it's like dress-down Shabbos, and that sort of bothers me. I don't want a three-piece suit and a tie, and I don't like that at Young Israel, for example, that everybody checks and everybody's very dressed, and it's fussy, and little boys look like little men, and all that stuff I could do without. On the other hand, it's like this goes a little bit too far to the other side because I'm old – not old-fashioned, maybe – and I think a certain dress – I don't know how to define it. I wouldn't want to have a dress code, but I think a certain level of dressing adds to the decorum of the – so I noticed that. On the whole, I just noticed that it was very warm. Simchat Torah was wonderful; we danced with the Torah. So I went first – I saw it advertised, and I thought, "I'll go there and see what it's like," and I signed up for the Yamim Noraim. I went, and it was beautiful. The davening was very spiritual and very serious, and it was familiar enough, so whoever was

leading the davening wore a kittel. I had been to other havurah-type things before, occasionally, and it wasn't me; it didn't feel like me, that sort of sitting on the floor or singing or guitar. I wasn't comfortable with that. This was more traditional, and that was nice. There was a respect for observance. It wasn't like – I knew that not everybody was doing what I was doing, but it was sort of accepted.

SR: When did you start taking on more –

AK: Roles?

SR: – roles?

AK: Gradually. I started taking roles in terms of being involved because it's a participatory minyan, so everybody has to do something. It's a lay-led, and so people are expected to take on roles, not just to come. So I started doing things like being a davening coordinator or being a meta-coordinator, that kind of thing – business roles, but not davening roles. I was going every week. That's the other thing that was strange to me is that people came, and they would come, and feel very much part of it, and be involved in it, but they'd come one week, and then they'd come back maybe three weeks later or four weeks later because they're either going somewhere else, another Shabbat,

[or] they were going skiing, or something. For me, I never felt like Shabbat was an option. I kept Shabbat, and it wasn't, "This week, I'll do Shabbat, and next week, I'll do something else." So once I was observing Shabbat, and I was, I never moved away from that. I never didn't observe Shabbat. I just didn't do any [inaudible], except the food. It was strange that people would come and feel very much part of it, but they didn't feel like they had to come every week. For me, it wasn't a question. Once I started coming, I went every week, and still do, although lately, I haven't been as often because I was sick or the snow. But otherwise, it's Shabbat; what do you do? You go to shul. But that's, I think, from where I came from. So it wasn't Shabbat as a sometime-thing.

SR: What made you start thinking about a bat mitzvah?

AK: I saw people were leyning; women were leyning, and women were doing haftarah, and women were leading the davening as well as men, not only but both. I thought it was very, very interesting. I started to learn how to leyn first.

SR: How did you learn?

AK: From somebody else. Do you know (Janet Segal)?

SR: (Janet Segal?).

AK: And Neil? Yes.

SR: Yes, yes. She's in my minyan.

AK: She taught me. Yeah, I know, but she used to be here. She taught me. She has a lovely voice, and she was a [friend]. We became very friendly. I was very close to her. I liked her very [much]. So you say about role models – some of these young women became my role models. I guess it works both ways because a lot of them say I'm a role model for them and that they've adopted me. They say they look up to me, which is very nice. Before that, I don't remember outstanding – it's not like I studied Talmud or something with somebody and that was a role [model], a woman who – my oldest sister was very much a role model in terms of – other than that, she's much more traditional than I am in that sense, but she's certainly very, very much involved with the religion and very knowledgeable, much more knowledge than I am. I always studied, and I'm still studying, but I'm not really a learned woman.

SR: So, what was the first time you read Torah or haftarah?

AK: Janet had a class of maybe five – maybe it started with eight people and ended up being five – to teach us how to read Torah. We did it the first time for (Yitro?) [inaudible], and there were maybe four or five – I think about [five]. So we had learned, each one of us, a little snippet of four or five lines. We'd do it again and again until we really knew it, and then we did it, and it was wonderful.

SR: What a first time to read Torah. That's amazing.

AK: It was just beautiful. It was wonderful. It was really [inaudible]. But I think the first time when I got an aliyah was amazing. I mean, to stand there – it still moves me tremendously. I've been doing it for a long time now. I don't read Torah anymore because there's just too much of a struggle. I did it for many years, and I stopped. But to get an aliyah, to stand there, and look at those letters, and to look at the Torah, and to feel connected, it was very powerful, very powerful for me, and it still is. It's nothing I take for granted. Every time I would stand, I think, "My God, all those years I wasted. All those years I wasn't" – it just blows my mind, it really does. I think of all those years that I was in the back somewhere watching. I used to go to Young Israel, and I used to get angry, and I couldn't understand. All these women – it didn't bother them. It was fine with them, and it made me furious. Also, when they built this new shul – Young Israel built a new shul. My son, David, was very active on the building committee, and he was part of it. I was furious that they put this balcony in. They had meetings, and I went to all the meetings, and there were maybe three or four women who cared, who didn't want it. I thought it was terrible to put into stone now so that you're locked into that for the next fifty years. Maybe now they don't –

SR: They could put the men back there.

AK: Or you can divide it and have men and women on both. But just the fact that they poured this in concrete – I was livid, and I argued about it. I gave my son a miserable time because I said, "How can you do this?" But the people didn't care. It did come up for discussion. It was more aesthetic. It was this; it was that. I don't care what the reasons were. There were reasons, logistical reasons. But I thought it was appalling. I was very upset. It's a beautiful shul; it really is.

SR: I've been.

AK: Have you been in there?

SR: Oh, yeah. I went to a wedding there the other week.

AK: Oh, yeah? And it's a very beautiful sanctuary – and the curtains, and it was very carefully done in terms of the wood and how it's chosen. I know a lot went into it – it was very carefully – so, from that point of view – and it lends itself to spirituality. It's more

quiet than it used to be in services. But I find it – it's still not quiet, but I can't go there anymore. I'm going to have to go for my grandson's bar mitzvah, but otherwise, it's – and occasionally, when my son leyns, I go.

SR: Have you ever read haftarah?

AK: Yeah. Well, I'm going to do another. I did haftarah for my bar mitzvah. That's what I did. I just did the Maftir and the haftarah for my bar mitzvah.

SR: So when was that? What year was that?

AK: '92.

SR: '92.

AK: So I asked some of my friends who were sitting next to me, “Do you think I could do



this?" And they said, "Sure, you can do it. We'll help." So I decided I wanted to do it. I asked Janet if she would – yeah, I think Janet taught me. And she did. She did. She made a tape, and we had lessons every week, and it was wonderful. I mean, speaking of bonding, I would go up the street – she lived up the street – and we'd go over together. She'd sing, and then I'd come home and do it again. It was just wonderful. In that sense, my kids were terrific. My kids who don't do this – my sons would help me after the bat mitzvah, or anytime I had to leyn; they would make a tape, and they'd go over it with me. They were very supportive, even though that's not where they are. But they were extremely encouraging. Anyhow, I thought I'd like to do the bar mitzvah, and I decided to learn, and I started working at it. I think I felt it as a statement of belonging to this community as a full-fledged adult member, participating member. I don't think I worded it in those phrases to myself. But I thought, "This is what I want to do now." It was scary, and it was a big step for me.

SR: It was a Saturday morning.

AK: It was a regular Shabbos morning. And what was wonderful – my daughter came over from Israel with one of her kids. All my kids came, and they were tremendously supportive. They didn't come and daven there. Maybe they davened first; I forget what they did, but they all were there. For example, my two sons said, "I want to take aliyot." I offered them, and they would not take aliyah. But somehow, we involved everybody.

SR: Did your husband go also?

AK: Oh, my husband? Yes. He's been terrific with all this. He was very supportive.

SR: And did any female [inaudible] have aliyot or just you?

AK: Yeah, my sister Monica came from Washington. Yes.

SR: She had an aliyah?

AK: She had an aliyah. On, yeah. I have the list of who got aliyah.

SR: Oh, good. I love it.

AK: Here. See, I didn't leyn the whole thing. I just did the Maftir. Aliyot to be given – and (Jeremy?) – maybe he took the first aliyah. He's a [inaudible]. I have his name down. But I don't know. Maybe he did, but I don't think so. I think he did not want to. My brother, who was alive at the time, my older brother, got an aliyah, and Janet got an aliyah. I don't know.

SR: Is your brother [inaudible]?

AK: No. My husband, my sons, my grandsons. I had a very nice invitation somewhere, and I don't know where it is. I made the invitation.

SR: I'd love to see it.

AK: I have to find it for you. I'll get it to you. This is not it. These are cards I received.

SR: So, tell me about it. It was regular [inaudible]?

AK: It was a regular Shabbat. It was Vayeshev.

SR: How nice. [inaudible]

AK: It was December, December the ninth, I think I have.

SR: It's my daughter's parashah.

AK: Yeah? Very nice. She leyned it?

SR: Oh, yeah.

AK: See, I only leyned the –

SR: It was Hanukkah, too.

AK: My kids – Nadia spoke. Nadia, my daughter, gave a d'var. It was just wonderful. It was just an incredible experience for me. The other thing was the tallit. My kids asked me if I wanted a tallit. Now, that absolutely floored me, first of all, because they didn't wear – women did not wear tallitot; women did not wear kippah, and here, they were asking if I wanted tallit. So I felt that was tremendous validation on their part because it meant that they were taking me seriously, and they realized that I was taking this very seriously. I was very moved because I had not expected – I had thought about whether I would do it tallit, or not to do a tallit. I wasn't sure. I wasn't ready. What did it mean? It was a statement – all kinds of things. But they offered me a tallit, and that was powerful. Again, very moved. I said, "Yes." But I thought about it. I said, "Let me think about it for a while." And I thought about it for a while, and I felt very strongly that if I put on a tallit, that was a sense of commitment, and I would have to daven every day, which I had not done before, and that was a big thing to take on.

SR: Did you decide to do that?

AK: Yes, I did.

SR: Did you choose your tallit? Did you go shopping?

AK: Oh, my daughter bought it for me in Israel – white, and it was beautiful. [inaudible]  
No, I didn't shop. They bought it for me, and they presented it, and it was just – then it was too big, and we had to have it taken in a little, shortened a little. It's from Israel.

SR: It's beautiful.

AK: And now it's – I didn't have the –

SR: [inaudible]

AK: That's new. [laughter] It's the latest touch.

SR: It's lovely. Where did they get this?

AK: [inaudible] or something, I think.

SR: [inaudible]

AK: In the [inaudible].

SR: [inaudible] so nice, and the colors are gorgeous.

AK: You see this? When we were in Israel once, we saw this. Dov and I bought it.  
That's me. [laughter]

SR: [laughter] That's great.

AK: With the purple tallit.

SR: That's great. That's awesome.

AK: And then they had this put on because it was itchy, [inaudible], but the (tekhelet?) is new.

SR: Did you wear kippah?

AK: Yeah, I wore kippah, a white kippah, and I wore this. Nadia, my daughter, spoke about – in Joseph, his father gives him a striped coat, a striped [inaudible]. Here, it's the other way around; the children gave the parent the striped – it was beautiful. It was just very moving, the whole experience. It was a tremendous amount of work; besides learning it and being very nervous about it – I'm not a public person. When I'm with a group, I'm sociable and stuff. But I'm basically shy, and I don't like showing off. I wanted to be given a role, but I didn't want to do it. [laughter] I want the option, but I didn't want to take it. [laughter] I don't have a great voice anyhow. It's adequate. But it was very powerful to stand there and look and see – first of all, the whole place was my friends – I mean, they were all with me – and my children. It was just one of the most important moments in my life, no question about it. It's had tremendous effects on my life.

SR: Did anybody refuse to come?



AK: Anybody refuse to come? I don't think so.

SR: That's great.

AK: I mean, there were people who came, who were friends of mine – aside from my family, who were friends of mine, who were Orthodox and didn't agree to this, or maybe it was okay for me; it's certainly not something they wanted, but they came – a lot of my friends. It was a wonderful celebration.

SR: So, did you have a kiddush in shul after?

AK: We had a kiddush in shul after, and then I don't know what we did for lunch, whether we had lunch. I have to reconstruct it, but I think so, probably for the family. Then we had a party that night. We had an open house, and people came. It was very nice. I'm not sure if it was Hanukkah. I don't think so. No, it wouldn't have been Hanukkah because if it was Hanukkah, we wouldn't have done the haftarah. We did the haftarah [inaudible].

SR: [inaudible] the same thing [inaudible] haftarah.

AK: Yeah. Because now, every time, if it's not Hanukkah, I do the same haftarah again. But it's time, I've decided, to move on. I'm going to do another haftarah, learn another haftarah. So I spoke to Janet already. But it was very nice. It was just very – it was profound. It was more than nice. It was very serious. It started me – then I started leyning on a regular basis, but that was a big struggle. That was very hard.

SR: What was hard about it? The singing, the memorization?

AK: Both. Everything. I put in a tremendous amount of effort. I did it for about five years, six years, I don't know. And then I decided it was spoiling my Friday night. I would spend all Friday. I put in so much time, and I didn't get results. I could do it here, and I'd get up there. I'd get very nervous and very anxious, and the results were not – I didn't sound terrible, but considering the time I put into it, it wasn't worth it.

SR: How about leading davening?

AK: That I do. I do. I [inaudible] regularly because nobody wants to be there early, and I don't mind. For me, that's not so early. I've started doing (shacharit?), but I haven't – and I did (shacharit?) once – not (shacharit?). I did [inaudible] on Rosh Hashanah several times. But I don't have a great voice, and I'm not very good at leading, but at the same time, it feels good. I go to KI now. What happened was, when my brother died about six or seven – I'm vague on dates. Part of it's my age; part of it's me. About six or seven years ago, my brother died. He had cancer – older brother. I wanted to – he had two children who were not going to say Kaddish for him. He had two adopted children, a son, who was not at all affiliated with Judaism, and a daughter, who was affiliated, but she was Reform, and she wasn't active. So I knew that nobody was going to say Kaddish, and I wanted to – well, maybe my sisters or my brothers-in-law. I don't know who was or wasn't. It wasn't a question of who was going to; I wanted to. So I wanted to say Kaddish for him, and I thought, "What am I going to do?" I thought, "I can't go stand behind the mechitza and wait for somebody." It just was so unappealing to me and so awful. I didn't want to go to Young Israel. The minyan doesn't meet every day. The minyan only meets on Shabbat. So Dov said to me, "Why don't you go to KI?" And it was like somebody had opened the window. Of course, it was obvious, but it wasn't obvious to me because that was – so I started going to KI. I went to KI every day for a year, every morning. Then I didn't want to just stop going, so now I go Monday and Thursday. [laughter] I may have missed once or twice, but I went. I said Kaddish every day, and it was very nice. Then I started being more active there. I'm in morning minyan. I don't go Shabbat (to them?). But on the morning minyan, I'm usually gabbai. The gabbai doesn't call people up, but the gabbai stands there and follows. That's another thing. I like being gabbai, first or second gabbai. I prefer being second because I'm not so great at calling up and saying – but I love standing up there and following every syllable. It's just [wonderful]. I know the Parshat, and now they become more familiar, and I understand most [inaudible]. Not all of it, but I understand a lot of it, certainly after time and time again. I'm part of it, and that is wonderful. I come home

every Shabbat on a high from being there and from what it is. It's also a very special group of people because I've been to other egalitarian Minyans. I went to Shira Hadasha in Israel, and I went to some other places. My daughter and son-in-law in Israel go to [inaudible], which is not egalitarian, but where there's a lot of participation by everybody, although there's a mechitza. Every year, they add a little – they're trying very hard. So they do Megillah; the women read. Every year, they do a little more, but they're not Shira Hadasha, and everybody knows, so they're suffering from that. [laughter] Anyhow, I went to an egal Minyan when I was in Israel, not Shira Hadasha, the Ma'ayanot, or whatever it's called. It wasn't the same for me. There's something about this community, which is very – it's a very fine group of people and very serious about their values and their praying, and that resonates with me very much. So I feel much more connected to religion than I ought to, much more spiritual. I don't say that every day I daven with great Kavanah, or I'm a very holy person. I don't think that's true at all. I would like to [be], but I still do it. I try very hard to go on a regular basis on Monday and Thursday. Now, it's very nice because I had an opportunity to work – I leyned at my granddaughter's bat mitzvah, and that was wonderful. It was the first time they [inaudible]. They have a separate women's – when they have a women's bat mitzvah, they have separate for the bat mitzvah, so it's just women, which was a problem for me. I mean, it's not what I want to be – it's not the way I think it should be. One of the wonderful moments was, before the bar mitzvah, my husband and I went with (Tamara?) to shul so that she could go over her – the week before. We stood on either side of her as gabbaim, following, and she was doing her leyning. It was just wonderful. [inaudible]. It's weird because when I think about my – when I daven in front of the [inaudible] for my father's one – I have [inaudible] for my dad. I think, "What would dad think if he saw me now?" I'd like to think that he would be pleased, but I'm not sure that's true. He wasn't closed in his thinking; he was a very liberal person. He wasn't a [inaudible] type of person. I don't know. [laughter] Anything else we didn't cover? I'm sorry. I get carried away.

SR: No, no, you're answering all my questions without my having to ask them. So you took on davening every day when you got the tallit. Is there anything else that you took on with the bat mitzvah?

AK: No.

SR: Because you had been doing everything up until then anyway.

AK: Well, I had been doing everything, but no, I didn't necessarily fast on all the minor fasts, and I didn't (take charge?) about that. I didn't take on tefillin because I figured it's too much. I've looked at that, but I don't think I'll do that.

SR: You're not tempted at all?

AK: I think I'd never get finished. I'm slow davening now, and it would take me forever if I'd be winding and unwinding. I don't know. I'm not particularly tempted. I wear a kippah. Then, what I've added is [that] at home now, on Friday night, I'll wear a kippah. I don't always daven Friday night; I do sometimes, but not always. I always feel I should,

but I don't always. I'll wear a kippah Friday night because we sing [inaudible] while we make kiddush and stuff like that.

SR: If you study, do you put on a kippah?

AK: Yeah, usually. It's not as much of a habit as I feel like it should be, and it bothers me a great – I'm also used to seeing men with kippot. I mean, Dov wears one all the time. My sons wear one, not necessarily at work; it depends on which son and when. For instance, when minyan has a meeting, and the guys don't wear kippot, it bothers me. Then I thought, "Well, if they're not – I'm not wearing [one]. Why should [they]?" But it does bother me because I still identify kippot with observant males. Yeah.

SR: Tefillin – do they strike you as masculine, as well?

AK: It always was. I'm getting used to that. In the beginning, it freaked me out, but I've seen women wearing tzitzit now. That's the other thing; the minyan has made an impact on me in terms of being more open. I was brought up very – I don't know. It's a question of the times also, not just my family. My family's European, so that's a little bit more narrowing – not narrowing, but "what will people think" kind of thing. But the minyan – there were gay couples and stuff like that. So, over time, I've changed the way I see

people and what I can accept. I mean, it's not necessarily that I would choose it, but if that's what people choose, okay, that's who they are, and that's what they are, and it's not an abomination before the Lord kind of thing. I'm comfortable. It's not something I would love to have in my children, to be honest, but I'm much more open to it than I was. So it's opened my vistas in a lot of ways, in that sense. In terms of taking on more, I don't think so, except [for] the davening, which is important.

SR: That affects your spiritual life, the davening?

AK: I don't know. It's something I feel like I have to do; there's no question. I mean, once I took up this – once I decided I would wear the tallit, then there was no question in my mind that that went with it. I'm pretty good about – I stick to it. That I always feel holy? I would like to feel more holy, no question. That I play around a little with the time if I have to – whether I eat first and then daven, or daven first – it's not perfect timing, and I know that. In some sense, I suppose I still think – I don't know – that men – it counts more. I don't know if it counts more. Although, for example, I wouldn't want my husband to be saying Kaddish for my brother or something like that. That I don't believe in at all. It's personal, I think. In some ways, I'm still a product of the times that I grew up with.

SR: Do you think your reading Torah and having aliyot has affected your spiritual life?

AK: Yes, definitely. Oh, absolutely. I mean, I feel so much more connected to the Torah. I don't know. I tell Dov's brother – Dov has a brother who [inaudible], and they're very strict, and they think I'm a nut. At their house – I mean, I put on tallit at their house. I also wear pants at their house, which – and they're very nice about it. I'm not sure I'm right, but I do. In the beginning, when we used to go to affairs there, Dov would say I have to cover my hair. Then, at some point, I stopped. I said, "Not in the house. I'm sorry. That's who I am, and I'm not going to cover my hair." My daughter, when she first married, covered her hair for many years, and now she doesn't. I mean, we're all sort of at different stages of evolution. None of my granddaughters are feminist. I would love it, but they're not.

SR: Not yet.

AK: Not yet. Well, I tried to show them. I think one son is more sympathetic than the other about it. Although, they've all been very supportive of me always, which makes me feel very good about it.

SR: Is there anything you would have done differently about your bar mitzvah? Anything you would have changed?



AK: I don't think so. Maybe leyn more, but no, I don't think so.

SR: Where do you think the Orthodox world is going as far as [inaudible]?

AK: Well, there is change. First of all, I'm impressed with the degree of learning and the number of women who are learned, and I think that's wonderful, and the opportunities for women to learn is fantastic. I think that's good. I don't know whether we'll see women rabbis in Orthodoxy. I know some who are studying to be rabbis in Israel. I don't think so.

SR: I'm studying [inaudible].

AK: Huh?

SR: I'm studying [inaudible].

AK: Yeah. At [inaudible]? Who will accept your – ?

SR: Nobody.

AK: Nobody.

SR: There are only three of us in the class that have decided to go on the [inaudible] track.

AK: That's the strictest –?

SR: That's the lowest level of the Orthodox rabbinate.

AK: Okay. So you will be ordained?

SR: We'll receive ordination from Hebrew College [HC]. If I want Orthodox [inaudible], I'm not studying with Orthodox rabbis. They offered to find some [inaudible] –

AK: Art Green doesn't –? He's just his own person?

SR: Right. I think he has [inaudible] JTS [Jewish Theological Seminary] or Reconstructionist. [inaudible] (Evan?) who has a private [inaudible] whom I respect very much, but they don't have Orthodox [inaudible]. They offered to find an Orthodox rabbi to give me the Orthodox [inaudible], and they prepared a program in conjunction with them. But I thought, "I'm not studying with this Orthodox rabbi. It would just be in name only." So I'd rather just know the stuff and not have the label. So I'm studying [inaudible], and at some point, when I finish, I want to receive all [inaudible]. I want to receive ordination from Hebrew College.

AK: So who would you [inaudible]? You'd have to get it from [inaudible]?

SR: Well, see, I wouldn't [inaudible] from Art Green and (Evan?), God-willing, and (Evan Leder?), and a third rabbi. But I don't think they'll be Orthodox.

AK: What's her name in Israel I know who's studying?

SR: [inaudible].

AK: Yeah. I'm going to see her. I don't know. Blu Greenberg says it'll happen. I don't think it will happen in my day. I don't see it happening.

SR: I don't know. I was surprised at the minyan I went to at TBZ [Temple Beth Zion] two weeks ago. These were Orthodox women.

AK: Really?

SR: And they led davening.

AK: But it was only women?

SR: No.

AK: No. It was mixed?

SR: It was mixed. [inaudible]

AK: And they were Orthodox women? Interesting.

SR: Now they're calling it Orthodox Egalitarian, which is a term I'm not familiar with.

AK: Which is a misnomer. [laughter]

SR: But do you consider yourself Orthodox?

AK: Well, they have separate seating? I don't know. I have a big problem with that. I call myself traditional because I don't think I'm really Orthodox. But I can't quite come around to calling myself Conservative, but that's more emotional. I know in terms of what I do, I'm closer to Conservative than Orthodox, I guess. I don't know. I'm certainly much more connected to Judaism than I ever was; there's no question in my mind about that. But I wonder what my kids really think about this. I do try to expose my grandchildren. I take them to the minyan. Now, my latest kick is Shelo Asani Isha. I haven't said it for many years.

SR: So what do you say?

AK: [inaudible] But my grandchildren will say this; they go to Maimonides.

SR: [inaudible]?

AK: Yes.

SR: I know.

AK: It kills me. I think, "My God, every day they're saying this," these little boys and little girls, and it drives me wild. I think, "How can we give this school money? How can we support this when that's what they're learning?" I said, "They shouldn't say it [out loud?]." I went to JOFA [Jewish Orthodox Feminist Alliance]. I went to several – one or two.

SR: I went to the last one.

AK: Yeah. Was it good?

SR: It was great.

AK: Yeah?

SR: Daniel Sperber spoke so beautifully. And Blu spoke and (Tamar?) –

AK: I went to one of the first or second. Who's Tamar?

SR: Tamar Ross.

AK: Oh, I know who she is. Yeah. I went to, I think, the first or second, and it was very interesting. First of all, when they had davening – when the women davened, they didn't count themselves [as] a minyan, and the woman who led davening waited until everybody had finished, and then it was her [inaudible] that she said out loud. And they didn't say kiddush, and they didn't say [kaddish?]. It killed me. I thought, "This is nuts. If you don't count yourself as ten – I don't care whether there are men or no men, but ten of you should somehow be" – and they don't. It bothered me. Then I went to – there was one session with the Conservative – and I thought, "This is where I belong." I mean, it resonated much more. I have respect. What did I hear? I mean, I heard some interesting things, but I figured this is not where I am anymore. So now what I do is I support my daughter-in-law. She wants to go. One daughter-in-law could care less. She's very happy behind the mechitza. She davens every day. She's very observant, but she likes playing the traditional Jewish wife, and she's perfectly content with that. But the other one is much more feminist. My daughter-in-law is now head of Ma'yan – Amy. You know Amy?

SR: She took over after what's-her-name?



AK: Yes.

SR: (Debbie?) [inaudible]

AK: Right.

SR: That's sort of when I dropped out because I began other studies. But I [inaudible]  
(Debbie?) [inaudible].

AK: So Amy's my daughter-in-law, and she's very interested in JOFA, and she's quite feminist. But she's quite strict because she comes – my two daughters-in-law came from Conservative homes and became Orthodox before they married my sons. It's really very interesting, the whole family pattern. My son-in-law also came from a Conservative home and became religious on his own – became Orthodox. So it's interesting that this is the way – and I think they're nuts. [laughter] I say to Amy, "You leyned? You had it all. Why'd you give it up?" There she is, covering her hair, and she knows a lot. But she likes JOFA, so I pay for her to go. So she goes to the things.

SR: It's inexpensive if you're a rabbinical student.

AK: Oh, yeah. Anyhow, they're on a tight budget. I certainly endorse it. Although there's something coming up at Brandeis, I think, this year. I think I'm going to go with her to that. The truth is I don't learn as much as I could or should. I'm not involved in – I've been to some Ma'yan courses, but I'm not a very serious learner. I'd like to learn more about davening because now that I'm doing it more, I'd like to know more and understand it more, and have more feeling for it. But doing Talmud or Gemara doesn't particularly appeal to me. But then, you must know (Shayna?), who's in the cantorial program at HC. Do you know those –?

SR: There's a (Shayna?). No. Well, they're very separate.

AK: They're very [inaudible] –

SR: I never see – in fact, I don't know where they are because I keep looking for them when I want a tape for something to daven. I have to learn – sometimes they make me tapes, and I can never find them. There's only a few of them.

AK: (Shayna's?) very good. And she's at KI.

SR: [inaudible] Yeah.

AK: They're very nice. They're nice [inaudible].

SR: Do you know Nancy Sargon?

AK: No.

SR: She's in the cantorial program, and she has a beautiful voice. So you don't think you'll see in your time Orthodox women rabbis?

AK: I don't think so. I think it's fantastic that women are much more learned, that you can hear a lecture, or you can go – I don't know. Ahuva Halberstam, I knew when she was here.

SR: She was my teacher at Ma'yan.

AK: She's wonderful. Yeah. She's wonderful.

SR: She taught my sons at Maimonides.

AK: Yeah. She's a very fun person. Judith Kates, I respect –

SR: She taught me last year and the year before.

AK: Yeah. She comes to our minyan.

SR: Does she go to Harvard –?

AK: She used to, but she comes to our minyan now pretty regularly.

SR: [inaudible] It's closer for her.

AK: Yeah. It's much closer, and her husband comes now. I don't know. That there are women who – what's going on in Israel is very exciting. I mean, in terms of the women who learn how to [inaudible].

SR: And Drisha.

AK: And Drisha. Yeah, I think it's wonderful. I think it's very exciting –

SR: We're getting there.

AK: – that it's being encouraged. But yeah, still, we have a long way to go. In Maimo [Maimonides], they always had girls learning with the guys, and they get flak for that now,

but they're still doing it. My friend studied Gemara. Rabbi Gewirtz leads a group, and it's women learning Gemara, although recently, he has said – by de facto, he is learning – I mean, in the morning, it was women because women weren't working and men were or something like that. But now, the learning has to be separate. He's very afraid of making – I got into a big argument with him last time I was at shul, which is not a good idea.

SR: He's rabbi the at [inaudible] –

AK: He's the rabbi at Young Israel. I said this about [inaudible]. I said, "It's a disgrace." He was very offended [by] me.

SR: Do you say [inaudible]?

AK: No, it's all positive. It's always from the –

SR: Yeah. That's what I do.

AK: It's [inaudible] –

SR: [inaudible]

AK: [inaudible] Yeah. But I've heard – who is it? Who's in Israel? With an R, who –

SR: A woman writer?

AK: No. A rabbi.

SR: A rabbi.

AK: Rabbi Risk –

SR: Rabbi Riskin?

AK: Riskin. He said you should not – he was against changing, changing texts, and he said the reasons. I forget what the reason [was], but he said, "That's from that period; you don't change." So I don't know.

SR: When you daven, do you add any [inaudible]?

AK: No. Not usually, but then again, I'm getting there because, again, I thought, "Oh, it's going to make it longer still, right?"

SR: It's just a few more words. [laughter]

AK: Just a few more words. [laughter] In the minyan, some people add Bilhah and Zilpah.



SR: I've heard that. Not too often. Once in a while, I hear that. I think that covers it. Is there anything else you want to add that we didn't cover that comes to mind? I'd love to read your –

AK: Okay. I'll give it to you.

SR: I'm going to copy it and mail it back to you. Is that okay?

AK: Okay. That's fine, or you can give it to Jamie, and she'll give it to me.

SR: Oh, okay. You see, Jamie? Has she been in [inaudible]?

AK: She comes, yeah, not always.

SR: I'll give it to Jamie. That's fine.

AK: Or even mail it to me. It doesn't matter. I would say it's on my computer, but I –

SR: And this as well?

AK: What is that? No.

SR: Can I take this, or would you rather not?

AK: Yeah, I think this is [inaudible].

[END OF INTERVIEW]