**Class #33- Netflix’s My Unorthodox Life - Attack or wake up call?**

Advanced Fellowship Parsha Class - Sponsored in memory of Alice Toby Barbanel *Z”l*

Rabbi Pinny Rosenthal - prepared collaboratively with Rabbi Yoni Sacks

[My Unorthodox Life](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1arJhKC2Bclsmu06wUSyAmQklHdWNRaaT/view?usp=sharing)

1. What are the 3 areas of perceived discrimination against women that Julia Haart identifies as the reason she abandoned her Orthodoxy?

2. Is Julia’s critique really about Judaism, or is it better thought of as a critique of a certain community's approach to treatment of women?

3. Is Julia completely wrong or is there something to what she says? What does the general public think about Orthodox Jews?

4. If Orthodox Judaism were a corporation, and the customers satisfaction rating was as low as Julia and the general community is assessing, what would the proper response be?

**Foundations of the Faith**

4:1 Now, Israel, listen to the Chukim [unexplained laws] and Mishpatim [laws of justice] that I am teaching you to do, so that you will remain alive and come to occupy the land that God, Lord of your fathers, is giving you….

4:5 See ! I have taught you Chukim and Mishpatim as God my Lord has commanded me, so [that you] will be able to keep them in the land to which you are coming and which you will be occupying. 4:6 Safeguard and keep [these laws], since this is your wisdom and understanding in the eyes of the nations. They will hear all these Chukim and say, 'This great nation is certainly a wise and understanding people.'

4:7 What nation is so great that they have God close to it, as God our Lord is, whenever we call Him? 4:8 What nation is so great that they have such righteous Chukim and Mishpatim, like this entire Torah that I am presenting before you today? 4:9 Only take heed and watch yourself very carefully, so that you do not forget the things that your eyes saw. Do not let [this memory] leave your hearts, all the days of your lives. Teach your children and children's children about 4:10 the day you stood before God your Lord at Horeb.

Rashi:

(4:6) **ושמרתם Safeguard**– This refers to the study of the laws ([Sifrei Devarim 58](https://mg.alhatorah.org/SP/Sifre%20Devarim/Devarim/58%22%20%5Cl%20%22e2%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank%22%20%5Co%20%22Sifre%20Devarim%2058)),
**ועשיתם** – **and keep [these laws] -** this must be explained according to what it implies: And you should observe these laws.

**כי היא חכמתכם ובינתכם וגו' for this is your wisdom and understanding [in the eyes of the peoples]** — i.e. through this you will be accounted wise and understanding men in the eyes of the peoples.

(4:8) **חקים ומשפטים צדיקים Chukim and righteous Mishpatim** – i.e. proper and acceptable ones.

(4:9) **Only take heed and watch yourself very carefully**  – But only then when you do not forget them but will do them in their true manner, will you be accounted wise and understanding men, but if you do them in a distorted manner through forgetfulness, you will be accounted foolish.

5) Why doesn’t Julia find the laws of the Torah a feature of a “wise and understanding people?”

6) Scenario # 1 – Nancy MJE’er has become fully observant over many years. The toughest mitzvah was applying the principle of modesty to dress. Jane, her work friend, invites her to a pool next Sunday. Nancy says that she will stop over for a time for a drink, but she won’t be wearing a bathing suit. Jane, looking at her skirt, asked are you part of the community that Julia Haart, from My Unorthodox Life, is always talking about? Why do you want men deciding what you should wear?!?

7) Scenario # 2 – Barry MJE’er’s old college buddies call him to get together for lunch on Sunday. He says that he would love to – but he would like to go to a kosher restaurant. They ask him – are you like religious kid aaron in “My Unorthodox Life”? When did you turn into a fundamentalist Jew with all their food taboos?!

8) Scenario # 3 - Renee MJE’er’s was chatting with her mother on the phone. Suddenly, her mother burst out: “I am so worried about your new Orthodox lifestyle. Every time I see Julia Haart on TV I think of you and the great life you are throwing away. Why do you want to be a second-class citizen in a cult”?