

Rabbis for Women of the Wall

רבנים למען נשות הכותל



January 20, 2011

Dear Chairman Sharansky,

Thank you for all you do for the State of Israel, which we so dearly love and support. We represent over 600 rabbis, 85 cantors, 57 Jewish organizations, and 1000 individuals, whose letters you have received over the past few months. Additional letters are attached.

We are deeply saddened by the shrinking size of the women's section at the *Kotel*, one of the holiest sites of our people, and we are very concerned that the plans for refurbishing the *Kotel* do not yet provide properly for Jewish women. There should be a section where *haredi* women and other orthodox and non-orthodox women may pray in silence. There should be a section for men where *haredi* and other orthodox and non-orthodox men may pray in accordance with their custom and out of earshot of *kol isha*. And there should be a section where women may raise their voices in prayer, wear a *tallit* and *tefillin*, read from the *Sefer Torah*, and be safe and within the law.

Clearly, our request is beyond architecture; we request a change in the law as well. Over eighty-five percent of Jews in our world, and, indeed, more than half of the Jews in Israel, are not orthodox, and many who are orthodox support Women of the Wall and do not support the silencing of women, nor the shrinking of their section at the *Kotel*. All over the world, we turn in prayer to Jerusalem, and more specifically, to the *Kotel* and *Har HaBayit*. The *Kotel* has become a place of holiness, filled the prayers of over two thousand years. For the sake of your children and ours, please hear our call, and raise the matter of the *Kotel's* refurbishing as an issue concerning all Jews everywhere.

Thank you for your consideration.

B'chavod rav,

Rabbi Ellen Dreyfus, Central Conference of American Rabbis
Rabbi Gilah Dror, Rabbinical Assembly of Conservative Judaism
Rabbi Yocheved Mintz, OHALAH, Association of Rabbis for Jewish Renewal
Rabbi Yael Ridberg, Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association
Rabbi Menachem Creditor, International Co-Chair, Rabbis for Women of the Wall
Rabbi Pamela Frydman, International Co-Chair, Rabbis for Women of the Wall

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