

Rabbis for Women of the Wall

רבנים למען נשות הכותל



January 20, 2011

Dear Member of Knesset Shai,

Thank you for serving as a leader in 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 names are on the attached letters.

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 gravely 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 must 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. In the stories about Rabbi Eliezer, the Talmud tells us that we are to adhere to the view of the majority. We, therefore, request that you and your colleagues in the Knesset take steps to amend the Holy Sites Law of 1967 to support the religious rights of all Jews at the *Kotel*, including the orthodox, and including the majority of our people throughout the world, whose custom allows, and, in fact insists, on a woman's right to lead worship and participate in it fully. We, our constituents, and those whom we represent all over the world, turn in prayer to Jerusalem, and more specifically to the *Kotel* and *Har HaBayit*. The *Kotel* has become a place of holiness, filled with the prayers of over two thousand years. Please do not ignore us. For the sake of your children and ours, please hear our call.

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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