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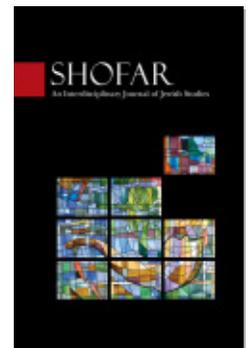
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## Feminists in the Temple of Orthodoxy: The Struggle of the Women of the Wall to Change the Status Quo

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# FEMINISTS IN THE TEMPLE OF ORTHODOXY: THE STRUGGLE OF THE WOMEN OF THE WALL TO CHANGE THE STATUS QUO

Yitzhak Reiter

## ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the struggle of the Women of the Wall (WoW), a minority group of religious, activist, and feminist women challenging the Orthodox, male, hegemonic status quo at Judaism's holiest site: the Western Wall. Since 1988, the group has been holding prayer services every Rosh Hodesh at the Wall with and without interruptions according to its custom—wrapped in colorful tallitot and reading aloud from the Torah. This article, based on interviews with the major political actors involved and content analysis of primary documents and publications, presents the action strategies of the various parties involved and analyzes the dispute's conflict resolution methods. It explores a series of questions: first, what has enabled legal and public recognition of a minority group's local custom that challenges the hegemonic status quo at the Western Wall? Second, how has a small group of women succeeded over more powerful forces in breaking the status quo in favor of a gender-oriented, pluralistic-religious agenda? Third, what are the implications of these achievements for arrangements at the Wall and other contentious holy places? This case contributes to existing scholarship on religious feminism as well as on shared and divided holy spaces, as the controversy exists not between two religions, but between different streams within Judaism.

## INTRODUCTION

On April 24, 2013, something extraordinary happened at the Western Wall, the Jews' most central holy place. A group of religious, activist, and feminist women—the Women of the Wall (WoW)—succeeded in breaking the ritual status quo at the site. The Jerusalem District Court Judge Moshe Sobel produced a ruling (interpreting a previous Supreme Court decision) that recognized the right of the WoW to conduct ritual worship at the Wall according to their custom, in a way that the majority of the worshippers at the place view as a disgraceful abomination.<sup>1</sup> The WoW's worship includes prayer and singing by women at Rosh Hodesh (the first day of each Jewish month), reading from the Torah while wrapped in colorful *tallitot* (prayer shawls) and wearing *tefillin* (phylacteries).

This ruling issued a dramatic change: it effectively opened the space for ritualistic pluralism at the Western Wall, a holy place that is open to everyone. It dealt a blow to the status of the hegemonic religious establishment that belongs to the Orthodox and Haredi/Ultra-Orthodox streams in Israel.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, for the religious Orthodox Jews currently dominating the Western Wall and Israel's religious institutions, the actions of the WoW are almost like bringing an "idol into the Temple"—a desecration of the holy place.

In April 2013, the same month in which Judge Sobel's ruling was published, the Chair of the Jewish Agency, Natan Sharansky, presented a new arrangement in an attempt to solve the controversy. It suggests erecting a third, egalitarian prayer plaza at the Wall, in what is known as the Robinson's Arch site (an area of the antiquities park south of the Mughrabi Ascent), identical in size and status to the current plaza dominated by the Orthodox Jews.

The Sharansky Plan promoted by the government may turn the achievements of the WoW upside down. Instead of bringing an end to the dispute, the court ruling has perhaps brought the beginning of a new conflict. Rather than granting women full egalitarian worship rights at the existing historic Western Wall (which was the WoW's main goal), this solution would create two different Western Walls: the historic Orthodox Western Wall plaza, and the new prayer platform at Robinson's Arch, which would have to fight for its recognition among the general public.

This case contributes to the existing research on holy places shared by more than one religious group, which mostly claims that holy places are indivisible and, by virtue of their status as "protected values," cannot be redivided without evoking a violent dispute. Ron Hassner and other scholars, for instance, have argued that at the religious level, the supreme spiritual force overpowers all else, and thus the congregation's commitment to protecting the sacredness of the place prevents the existence of any compromise or alternative on the custom of the place.<sup>3</sup> Hassner claims that the existence of division arrangements at Samuel's Tomb and the Cave of the Patriarchs (Me'arat HaMachpela) is irrelevant because these are forced arrangements. I have studied the shared arrangements at the Cave of the Patriarchs/Al Haram Al-Ibrahimi and the Tomb of Samuel the Prophet/Nebi Samuel and conclude that the action of division arrangements creates, over time, a new reality, with which the parties come to terms. When a powerful governmental agent dictates and enforces amendments to the status quo, and when these are carried out over time, the nature of the change becomes a fact.<sup>4</sup>

This study adds to previous studies of Lea Shakkdiel,<sup>5</sup> Stuart Charmé,<sup>6</sup> and Pnina Lahav,<sup>7</sup> who studied the gender-religious factor of the dispute, and to Yuval Jobani and Nahshon Perez's study on the moral solution to the dispute.<sup>8</sup> This article analyzes the strategies and conflict resolution methods of the dispute, incorporating also the broader perspective of the Conservative, Reform, and Modern Orthodox streams and revisiting the accomplishments of the WoW, which should also be viewed as part of a larger struggle over the shape and identity of Israeli society.<sup>9</sup>

The case of the WoW—a minority group that has challenged women's inferiority in Judaism—adds another dimension to the research on shared and divided holy spaces. The controversy over prayer exists not between two religions, but rather between different streams within Judaism, and by doing so also adds a case study to religious feminism. An analysis of this case allows us to explore a series of questions related to shared holy spaces and the breaking of the status quo: first, what has enabled legal and public recognition of a local custom of a minority group that challenges the hegemonic status quo at the Western Wall? Second, how has a small group of women succeeded over larger, more powerful forces in breaking the status quo in favor of a gender-oriented, pluralistic religious agenda, while other political movements and activists have failed? And third, what are the implications of these achievements for arrangements at the Western Wall and other contentious holy places?

Based on interviews with the major political actors of the dispute and content analysis of documents and publications, this article seeks to answer these questions and analyze the legal and public implications of the WoW's achievements. I begin with an exposition of the status quo at the Western Wall before and after 1967 with regard to the controversy over the historical, existing, and renewing local custom. Next, I present the challenge posed by the WoW before the hegemonic group and the government of Israel, and describe the development of the dispute in the public and legal arenas. I conclude by analyzing the action strategies of the parties, pointing out the reasons for the WoW's success and assessing the implications for granting representation at the Western Wall to both the WoW and the non-Orthodox streams.

#### THE CONTROVERSY OVER THE STATUS OF THE WESTERN WALL AND LOCAL CUSTOM

The conflict over the right to pray at the Wall receives much attention because of the paradox that the Wall presents: on the one hand, the Wall is perceived by

the public as a place that is sacred to the entire Jewish nation, but on the other, it is a place in which the custom patterns have been decided by the Orthodox stream alone. From the outset, the struggle of the WoW has evoked a public and legal question as to the meaning of local custom at the Western Wall. In particular, questions arose over whether or not local custom excludes the customs of other Jewish groups, what was the historical character of the Wall with regard to women's prayer, and whether the Wall has the status of a synagogue.

In 1967, when Israel gained control of the Western Wall, it determined a new status quo there, dictated by the Orthodox religious establishment in Israel, which over time became permanent as local custom. The religious establishment managing the Western Wall believes that local custom should reflect the historical continuity of the Jews praying at the Wall which, according to Orthodox opinion, included separation between men and women and did not include women's prayer except for personal pleas to God. However, this position is not supported by the historical sources.<sup>10</sup> In reality, mixed prayer and egalitarian prayer did historically exist at the Western Wall, when the practice there took the form of an individual prayer. It was only in the first years of Israel's rule at the Wall, when practices were determined by the Ministry of Religious Affairs (under Orthodox control), that separation between men and women at the lower prayer plaza was enforced, in line with the custom in Orthodox synagogues.

The Official in Charge of the Western Wall, Rabbi Shmuel Rabinowitz, claims that custom becomes permanent by the majority of those who worship at the Western Wall, who belong to the Orthodox stream.<sup>11</sup> In contrast, the position of the WoW and non-Orthodox movements is that the Western Wall is pan-Jewish, both a religious and national site, and it therefore belongs to all the Jews in the world. They believe the local custom should be pluralistic, reflecting the position of the majority of religious Jews in the world, who belong to the Reform, Conservative, and Modern Orthodox streams, as well as the position of the majority of Israel's residents, who are secular.

The WoW's main effort is to challenge the existing local custom at the Wall. Since 1988, they have been holding their prayer services with and without interruptions according to their own custom—which includes praying every Rosh Hodesh, wrapped in colorful tallitot, some also wearing tefillin and reading aloud from the Torah. This raises the question: have the WoW, over time, created a new status quo and local custom at the Wall? The Supreme Court ruled that indeed, the WoW had earned their right to pray "according to their way."<sup>12</sup> However, as we will see, the WoW were not granted permission to read the To-

rah at the Wall, due to a possible offense to the (Orthodox and Ultra-Orthodox) worshippers' feelings. Instead, the WoW were requested to conduct this part of their service in the Archeological Park area.

### THE REVOLUTIONARY CHALLENGE OF THE WoW

The WoW group was established following a definitive event. In November 1988, an international congress of Jewish feminist women was held at the Hyatt Hotel in Jerusalem. Towards the end of the conference, one participant, Rivka Haut, an Orthodox feminist from Brooklyn, suggested conducting a "gratitude prayer for the wellbeing of the State [of Israel]" at the Western Wall, with women reading from the Torah for the first time at this site, while still maintaining the Orthodox prayer approach.<sup>13</sup> Following this, the women from Jerusalem among them decided to make this a regular custom every Rosh Hodesh. Eight days later, on Rosh Hodesh Tevet, 5749 (December 9, 1988), the women brought a Torah scroll with them. When they began reading out loud from the Torah, wrapped in tallitot, a violent rampage broke out from the men's section, which included spitting, cursing, and snatching the Torah scroll from the women's hands.<sup>14</sup>

This event led to the formation of the Women of the Wall and the American parent organization named The International Committee for Women of the Wall. According to the WoW, it was the outburst of the Orthodox Jews towards them that revealed their power to challenge the Orthodox hegemony that discriminates against women, and the necessity of turning this act into a regular tradition.<sup>15</sup>

The Women of the Wall, then, arose out of the American feminist movement and served as a continuation of a women's network in North America that was tired of the marginal role of women in prayer. It unites Jewish women of all observances—Orthodox, Modern Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform—and currently has 160 listed female and male members. The International Committee for Women of the Wall provides substantial financial support for WoW, and a significant portion of this support comes from the Modern Orthodox community. Many American Modern Orthodox women who visit Israel have participated regularly in WoW from the beginning and have played a disproportionate role in WoW.<sup>16</sup> With their pluralistic composition, the WoW advocate for both genders to participate equally in Jewish practices, including prayer and reading from the Torah, while sitting together.<sup>17</sup> As Shakdiel writes, the WoW's great innovation was the inclusion of reading from the Torah and going up to the Torah, in particu-

lar on Jewish holidays like Purim, Rashey Hodesh (the first day of each Jewish month as a special religious festival for women) and Bat Mitzvah celebrations.<sup>18</sup>

In particular, the WoW seek to fight against the exclusion of women in the Orthodox space and bring about a change to Orthodox women's status by changing the perception of the religious woman and educating women about the political, religious, and social rights of women in Judaism.<sup>19</sup> The WoW demand prayer rights as an equal religious group at the Western Wall. As Dr. Bonna Haberman explained, "What occurs in a holy place has more ability to change . . . because it touches the Zionist world as well."<sup>20</sup> The WoW recognize the Wall as, according to WoW Chair Anat Hoffman, "an Archimedean point through which many sicknesses in the Israeli society can be rectified."<sup>21</sup> As Professor Frances Raday, who represented the WoW in their second appeal to the HCJ (1995), stated, any favorable change regarding women's status within the religious sector would in turn affect women's status in Israeli society at large, especially in the areas where Orthodoxy is dominant: marriage, divorce, and conversion to Judaism.<sup>22</sup>

Meanwhile, the heads of the conservative Orthodox stream in Israel, represented on this matter by the Official in Charge of the Western Wall, are unwilling to recognize women's prayer at the Wall. They view such worship as subversive because it includes women's singing heard in the men's section, which Orthodox men (and some women) consider as erotic and forbidden (in Hebrew: "kol be isha erva"). They also deny women's right to lay tefillin, wrap themselves in tallitot, and read from the Torah, believing that these commandments are intended for men only. The WoW's alternative interpretation of the Halachic sources is thus subversive—and their egalitarian practice at the Wall is revolutionary—because it undermines the Orthodox hegemony that claims interpretational exclusivity. The Orthodox streams, meanwhile, consider the WoW as provocative agents that seek to deliberately harm the state-determined status quo and Orthodox hegemony.<sup>23</sup> Although the WoW have not been authorized to represent the Reform and Conservative movements, their struggle represents the effort of these streams—and particularly the interest in recognition and representation in the religious system in Israel. These non-Orthodox movements have long worked for recognition of their rabbis' conversion to Judaism and marriage ceremonies, and also to receive a section of the Western Wall for their worship. However, the Reform and Conservative movements do not view the WoW as representative of their cause, and until recently the movements even viewed the group as a nuisance and a disrupting agent.

## THE STRUGGLE IN THE PUBLIC AND LEGAL ARENAS

The WoW's struggle took on an institutionalized dimension shortly after they began their activity. On the evening before the WoW's prayer in December 1988, an anonymous person called the Official in Charge of the Western Wall, Rabbi Yehuda Getz, to warn him that a group of feminist women was about to arrive and destroy the Wall partition dividing the two plazas. Rabbi Getz contacted the police, which prepared itself for the group's arrival. After ten minutes of the WoW's prayer, the police stopped it due to objections by other worshippers at the Wall. In an attempt to solve the dispute, Rabbi Getz told the WoW that they could pray "in the inner burrows of the Wall" (Wilson's Arch, at the beginning of the tunnel).<sup>24</sup>

Following the event, and in preparation for the upcoming Rosh Hodesh Adar prayer, the WoW notified the police of their intention to pray, but once again, they received curses and expressions of violence from other worshippers. In preparation for Ta'anit Ester (a day before Purim), Rabbi Getz, the police representatives, and Anat Hoffman met and agreed upon an arrangement whereby the WoW could pray at the Wall on Ta'anit Ester—however, without tallitot and Torah scrolls, so as not to give the Orthodox public grounds for acts of violence. Rabbi Getz promised to take care of the WoW's safety and "the execution of their prayer." However, when the WoW arrived according to the agreed-upon arrangements, their very entry into the women's section created a riot. Orthodox men burst into the women's section, yelling, cursing, throwing chairs and stones, and shattering bottles aimed at the group of praying women. The police were forced to intervene and disperse the Orthodox male and female rioters by scattering gas grenades on the Western Wall Plaza.<sup>25</sup> But instead of removing the rioters on the Orthodox side from the plaza, Rabbi Getz decided to remove the women, claiming that they were violating the public order.

The next day, the WoW appealed to the Supreme Court, sitting as the High Court of Justice (HCJ), against the Official in Charge of the Wall, the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the Chief Rabbis of Israel and the police. The WoW asserted their rights to pray at the Wall according to their custom, and to exercise their freedom of religion and worship and their right to equality. They demanded egalitarian use of the women's section, based on the explicit principle of equality for women in Israel's Declaration of Independence. Concurrently, the WoW filed an additional appeal with the HCJ against the Official in Charge of the Western Wall et al., with the support of the US-based International Com-

mittee for the WoW.<sup>26</sup> The Supreme Court sat in judgment of the two appeals as one. Hoffman explained that this was an opportunity to tip the scales in their direction, since the Supreme Court, led by Aharon Barak, had recently ruled in a series of cases in favor of religious women regarding their integration into state-controlled religious institutions.

In the months and years that followed, while the HCJ sat on the appeal, the WoW continued conducting prayers and Bat Mitzvahs and reading the Eicha Scroll on Tish'a Be'Av and Esther's Scroll on Purim in the women's section; however, they were requested not to perform reading from the Torah at the Wall, but only at the Archeological Park (and in most cases they abstained from doing so).<sup>27</sup> A few months after the appeal was filed, the Minister of Religious Affairs formed regulations intended to prevent the WoW from praying at the Wall, forbidding "performance of a religious ceremony other than in accordance with local custom, which offends the sensibilities of worshippers from among the public with respect to the site in question."<sup>28</sup>

In 1994 (five years after the appeal had been filed), the Supreme Court gave its first ruling, which revealed a clear gap between those judging according to their religious versus secular worldviews. Justice Menachem Elon, a religious judge and the deputy to the president of the Supreme Court, presented the WoW's prayer as an ideological struggle, claiming that the regulations give "expression to the principle of maintaining the 'status quo,' to the principle of maintaining public order at a holy place, and mainly—by representing the widest common denominator." He added that the Wall "is the place for a 'war' of deeds and opinions on this issue."<sup>29</sup>

In opposition, the secular Justice Shlomo Levin wrote, "The nature of a custom is that it changes according to the changing times, and within its limits should express a pluralistic and tolerant approach to the opinions and customs of others." The court's president, Justice Meir Shamgar, decisively expressed the WoW's rights: "Any person wishing to address one's creator with prayer shall be permitted to do so in their own style and way, provided that this does not constitute actual harm to the feelings of others."<sup>30</sup>

Ultimately, the court rejected the appeal but expected the government to find a way to balance the values of both parties. It ruled that within six months, the government should find "suitable arrangements and conditions, within which the appellants shall be able to exercise their right to pray according to their custom" while "moderating the harm to other worshippers' feelings and while maintaining the required security arrangements."<sup>31</sup> While this ruling gave pref-

erence to the value of Orthodox worshippers' feelings over the WoW's right of egalitarian worship, it clearly marked the path to breaking the status quo and creating a new local custom at the Wall.

However, the government did not implement the court's decision. Approximately one year later, the WoW filed another appeal with the HCJ designed to force the government to implement the ruling. The Supreme Court requested the appointment of a governmental committee that would decide on the issue according to the spirit of its ruling in order to find a balance between the two clashing values. The government appointed a General Directors' Committee that submitted in April 1996 its conclusions to shift the WoW prayer from the historic Western Wall to the Robinson's Arch site.

However, the WoW were unsatisfied by this decision. They appeared before an additional committee, the Ne'eman Committee, which also ruled in September 1998 that the WoW should conduct their prayers at the Robinsons' Arch site only, not in the women's section of the Western Wall, for fear of severe order violations and harming the sanctity of the Wall space.<sup>32</sup> The WoW, with no other choice, agreed to accept the suggestion, provided that the Robinson's Arch compound would be prepared as a proper prayer area. Until it would be ready, they requested to continue praying without interruption (i.e., with police protection) at the women's section of the existing Wall Plaza.

However, the new, agreed-upon prayer plaza was not prepared, perhaps due to internal disagreements between the authorities. The Supreme Court, therefore, had to rule on the appeal. In its (second) ruling on May 2000, the court decided to issue an absolute order instructing the government to establish arrangements that allow the WoW to "exercise their right to pray according to their custom in the Western Wall plaza."<sup>33</sup>

The government appealed against this ruling and requested a hearing with an extended panel of the Supreme Court. In April 2003, the HCJ annulled its previous ruling from 2000 and decided to adopt the state's suggestion that the Robinson's Arch site would serve the WoW. The government asserted that Robinson's Arch is one of the Western Wall sections, and prayer of the WoW there would "make friction unnecessary and prevent the offending of the feelings of those praying at the Wall in the way that has been customary since ancient times."<sup>34</sup>

Justice Mishael Heshin dissented to this ruling, stating that Robinson's Arch would not suffice for the WoW's prayer. He noted that while the Robinson's Arch site, like the Western Wall, is "a remnant of the western barricade

wall of the Temple Mount," it "does not stand at a level of sanctity and uniqueness equal to that part of the western barricade wall named *the* Western Wall."<sup>35</sup> Justice Heshin further noted that Robinson's Arch currently serves as a unique archaeological park, and the Antiquities Authority did not agree to prepare the site as a place of prayer. Therefore, he argued that the government must find another, proper way to allow the WoW to pray at the existing Western Wall Plaza.<sup>36</sup>

In the time between the second HCJ decision (2000) and the subsequent ruling that annulled it (2003), the WoW prayed at Robinson's Arch, as did the Conservative worshippers who had been granted permission from the government to conduct their services there.<sup>37</sup> The WoW usually began their prayer in the women's section, but then transitioned to Robinson's Arch in order to read from the Torah, since they were prevented from reading in the women's section.<sup>38</sup>

Beginning in 2009, a series of arrests of WoW members took place—for the first time in the 21 years of WoW prayer—which received headlines in the Israeli and global media against the background of a wider phenomena of Ultra-Orthodox and religious exclusion of women in Israeli society. On November 18, 2009, Nofrat Frenkel, a medical student and member of the Conservative Movement, was arrested and charged with violating the local custom by wrapping herself in a tallit and holding (not reading from) a Torah scroll.<sup>39</sup> According to Hoffman, Frankel's arrest was a turning point that generated a wave of change in the public opinion and media in favor of the WoW, especially at a time when Israeli society was becoming less tolerant of Orthodox societies' exclusion of women.

In June 2010, during the Rosh Hodesh Av prayer, the police carried out an additional arrest—this time of WoW chair of Anat Hoffman, because she was holding a Torah scroll.<sup>40</sup> Three months later Hoffman was arrested again at a WoW event and spent a night in detention. In December 2012, following a period of several months in which the WoW had been required to follow new and strict instructions from the police, the important American Reform Rabbi Elyse Frishman was arrested and detained for three hours after managing to enter the plaza with a tallit. When a police officer approached her and requested her to remove it, she related, "I said I did not understand, that I was not breaking any law, neither Israeli nor Jewish."<sup>41</sup>

In response to this arrest, Rabbi Shmuel Rabinowitz stated that the aim of the WoW was not to pray, but to demonstrate and attract media attention by creating "noise and mayhem." The struggle, he said, makes "Israel look[] bad, and the Wall look[] bad. We told [the WoW] that the Wall is not the place to

express political viewpoints."<sup>42</sup> Rabbi Rabinowitz's words reflect the successful strategy of the WoW: Once they understood that the police were carrying out arrests to enforce the law which garnered media attention in their favor, they took full advantage of it.

The arrests also garnered support for the WoW in North America, where the majority of the Jews belong to the non-Orthodox streams. Thus, although Orthodox Jews comprise less than 10% of the American Jewish community (and Modern Orthodox Jews comprise only 3-4%) American Modern Orthodox Jews have played a disproportionate role in WoW.<sup>43</sup> Many American Jews feel that the Israeli government, which exclusively backs the Orthodoxy in conversion and marital relations arrangements, acts against most of the world's Jews. They exerted great pressure on the Israeli government to act differently. In response, in early 2013 Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu requested from the Chair of the Jewish Agency, Natan Sharansky, to intervene in the controversy and suggest a compromise solution. As Deputy Minister Ben Dahan admitted in our interview, Netanyahu and Sharansky feared the Diaspora Jewry and therefore, acted quickly to find a compromise.

In addition to this support from American Jewry, the WoW also received increased political backing from new female Members of Knesset (MKs) elected in January 2013. Three MKs—Tamar Zandberg (Meretz), Michal Rozin (Meretz) and Stav Shafir (Labor), joined the WoW's prayer in March 2014 and confronted police officers at the entry to the plaza because they had been forbidden to enter with a tallit. They entered to pray despite the resistance. MK Zandberg said: "I am secular woman, but I identify with the struggle of these women for freedom of speech and religion."<sup>44</sup> Yet, the WoW did not garner major support among the Israeli secular public, and still faced severe opposition from Israel's more conservative religious sector. In March 2013, posters were distributed in Jerusalem, calling on the public to come and save the Wall, which had been "trampled upon and desecrated by women called the 'Women of the Wall.'"<sup>45</sup>

In April 2013, the Jerusalem District Police Commander, Major General Yossi Pariente, ordered his team not to allow the WoW to wrap themselves in a tallit at the Wall Plaza, which some viewed as contrary to previous rulings given.<sup>46</sup> On 11 April 2013 the police arrested five women from the WoW group for allegedly creating provocation that offended the feelings of the other worshippers. However, the Jerusalem Magistrates Court Judge, Sharon Larry-Bavli, instructed to release the women, ruling that it was not the female worshippers who violated the order, but rather it was the male and female protestors against them.<sup>47</sup>

Two weeks later, on April 24, 2013, the District Court Judge Moshe Sobel issued his ruling (presented at the beginning of the article) that the WoW's prayer does not offend the public's feelings or breach the regulations of Holy Sites. He added that the Orthodox worship cannot be claimed as the local custom, and that the WoW should not be prevented from continuing to hold prayer at the Wall Plaza.<sup>48</sup> This court ruling completely changed the status of the WoW and the legal balance of power between the WoW and the state authorities governing the Wall. It placed the responsibility on the government to enable the WoW's prayer and protect them from aggression—or, alternatively, to prepare an appropriate prayer plaza for the WoW in the Robinson's Arch area.

Rabbi Rabinowitz sought to bypass this latest ruling. He requested the Minister of Religious Affairs, Naftali Bennett, to create new regulations to define the local custom, to prevent the WoW from praying at the women's section.<sup>49</sup> He also requested the Legal Advisor to the Government and the State attorney to appeal Judge Sobel's ruling, claiming that it would once again set the ground on fire.<sup>50</sup> Indeed, a month after the ruling, thousands of Ultra-Orthodox Jews, instructed by their rabbis, arrived at the Wall Plaza to protest against the WoW praying with tallit on Rosh Hodesh Sivan (May, 10, 2013). Rabbi Ovadia Yosef and other Ultra-Orthodox rabbis called on all the seminary girls to arrive at the Wall plaza at 6:30 am (half an hour before the WoW) to cancel "the decrees."<sup>51</sup> Now, for the first time, the police arrested Ultra-Orthodox Jews for violating the order and infringing on the right of the WoW to pray, rather than the reverse. Three Ultra-Orthodox Jews were arrested for throwing garbage and stones at the female worshippers.

In the following months, the WoW continued in their feminist and intra-religious struggle. Their prayer at the women's section was received mostly without resistance, likely because their opposition had internalized the lesson that their activity against the WoW only promotes the WoW's status in public opinion. In October 2013, for instance, Rabbi Rabinowitz requested the female seminary students to not come and protest against the WoW "so as not to create additional tension and controversy."<sup>52</sup>

On October 24, 2014, Rosh Hodesh Heshvan, the WoW succeeded to read from the Torah in the women's section, and held a Bat Mitzvah ceremony in which a girl (Alma Weiss) read from the Torah. They brought a small Torah scroll that did not attract much attention and their prayer took place without any resistance.<sup>53</sup> They also started an advertising campaign on bus signs in Jerusalem, calling for girls to hold Bat Mitzvah ceremonies with the WoW, sev-

eral of which were vandalized when passing through the Ultra-Orthodox Me'a She'arim neighborhood.<sup>54</sup>

Anat Hoffman points to the recruitment of and communication with the American Jewish public as a major factor in the success of the WoW's struggle. Once the government was willing to have contacts with the WoW and the non-Orthodox streams, an unprecedented unification formed between the three movements: Conservative, Reform, and the WoW.<sup>55</sup> Ironically, however, the WoW's success in the political arena played out to the WoW's disadvantage. The American Reform movement, the largest of the Jewish streams, and the Conservative movement felt that the political achievement was a result of the pressure that *they*—rather than the WoW—had put on the Prime Minister. In the next chapter of the WoW's struggle, which began with Netanyahu's nomination of Sharansky to tailor a compromise, the Reform and Conservative movements stepped in, effectively pushing the WoW and their original objectives to the margins. The main point of the dispute began to shift to a discussion of the construction of a new Wall, rather than women's prayer at the existing Wall. The Reform and Conservative movements based in the US, rather than the WoW, served as the main actors in negotiations with the government.

#### ERECTING A NEW WESTERN WALL: THE SHARANSKY-MANDELBLIT PLAN

In the same month as Judge Sobel's ruling in April 2013, the Chair of the Jewish Agency, Natan Sharansky, publicized a plan for resolving the dispute that had broken out between the government and the North American Jewry, the non-Orthodox movements, and WoW. In the compromise that Sharansky suggested, known as the Sharansky Plan, the Western Wall Plaza would be enlarged southwards, almost reaching the southwestern corner of the Temple Mount, so that it would be equal in size to the Orthodox Wall plaza, and an elevated prayer podium would be erected, with the same height as the historic Wall plaza. The new prayer area, temporarily named Ezrat Israel [Israel section], would be designed for anyone not wishing to pray at the Orthodox part of Wall. The entrance to the Western Wall from the south side would be shared by all, and from there each group would go to the part where it wished.<sup>56</sup>

The responses to the Sharansky Plan were mixed, and split the WoW into two camps. Some objected to the plan because it would move them away from their original objective of generating a change among Orthodox women.<sup>57</sup> However, others felt that in light of the HCJ rulings that offered the Robinson's Arch

area as a prayer site for egalitarian prayer, the WoW could not reject the offer immediately. Eventually Anat Hoffman accepted the compromise as a better alternative than the present situation, indicating her political realism. It appears that she received pressure from the Reform movement in the United States and Israel, in which she holds a senior office. The Reform movement is mainly interested in state recognition of it as equivalent to Orthodoxy, and therefore its objectives do not fully overlap with the WoW's revolutionary struggle.

As a result of her acceptance of the Sharansky Plan, opposition to Hoffman arose among the WoW. Cofounder Bonna Haberman, and 16 additional WoW members and members of the Kolech organization of Modern Orthodox women, objected to the compromise and publicized their stance, according to which they were unwilling to cede the struggle to worship according to their custom at the Wall's historic plaza, and unwilling to accept Robinson's Arch as a substitute.<sup>58</sup>

In contrast, Rabbi Rabinowitz was in favor of Sharansky's compromise.<sup>59</sup> However, in his opinion, Sharansky made a mistake of presenting a large plan; a smaller plan (i.e., a smaller prayer plaza), to be executed in steps, would be more realistic.<sup>60</sup>

Meanwhile, Naftali Bennett—likely thinking that the Sharansky Plan was too ambitious and unrealistic—decided to act on his own accord with the Director General of his ministry (Ministry of Jerusalem Affairs), Dvir Kahana, to erect a temporary prayer platform designed for 450 worshippers (450 SQM). This was constructed hastily and exposed in August 2013 at a press conference at the site. Even though the platform was at least ten meters away from the Wall, Bennett's public relations team created the impression that one could touch the Wall itself from the platform, likely intended to counter television footage from the day before when Anat Hoffman ridiculed the platform as a "tanning balcony."<sup>61</sup>

That same month, August 2013, Government Secretary Avichai Mandelblit, after leading a team to study the Sharansky Plan in consultation with all parties concerned, suggested a gradual process for fulfilling the plan. This included, in the first phase, the erection of modest prayer plazas in the Robinson's Arch area. These plazas would be open and free to the general public for the entire day and would be equipped with stages, Holy Arcs, Torah scrolls, and suitable prayer books. It would be administered by representatives from both the government and the Jewish Agency. Late in 2014, the Mandelblit team's discussion led to an agreement on the structure of the two Walls and the official state plaza above them, their official names, and the administrative details of each. A draft of the regulations for arranging the matter has been agreed

upon. In short, it suggested a smaller prayer platform from the one suggested by Sharansky; separation into two Wall administrations, the original under the Orthodox Rabbi of the Wall and an additional "Azarat Israel" (a section of all Israel—Jewish people, meaning nontraditional Orthodox devotees) and the second to be headed by the other Jewish streams and the Jewish Agency; and one entrance to the two Kotels with official signs recognizing the Azarat Israel, State support for education to the later administration, and new attractive architectural planning and decoration of the new section of the Wall.

Rabbi Gilad Kariv, appointed in 2009 as director general of the Reform movement in Israel, is aware that it is impossible for the new plaza to be equal in size. He said that the upper plaza will be an official state-associated, public, national area (excluding mass prayer events) and no longer subject to the Orthodox administration, but rather, shared by all streams. The negotiation on the regulation details has ended to the satisfaction of the non-Orthodox movements, and at the time of this essay, the negotiations on the physical character of the "new Wall" are in progress. The Prime Minister has appointed a known architect from New York, Michael Arad, to suggest a physical design. The erection of the new Wall is also accompanied by disputes over authority and the financial interests of those involved, which are beyond the scope of this essay.

In considering the Sharansky Plan, it is important to note that in places that are holy to more than one religious community, there are several ways of dividing official authority between the different communities. This is mainly done by dividing the access and prayer times of the different communities, or dividing the prayer space between them. These types of arrangements are in place, for example, at the Cave of the Patriarchs/Al Haram Al-Ibrahimi and the Tomb of Samuel the Prophet/Nebi Samuel. Sharansky's Plan and the Mandelblit team's proposal are a third type of division: they suggest enlarging the sacred space—expanding the holy part of the Western Wall southwards and creating a second, pluralistic Western Wall. This proposal is one of the creative solutions for resolving disputes at holy places and providing recognition to excluded and discriminated-against groups. However, this solution has two disadvantages: first, the historic holy place would be considered more authentic—at least at the beginning—and as possessing a more elevated status than the holy space added to it. The second disadvantage is that an important part of the Archeological Park would be dramatically harmed. A related difficulty is a possible objection by Jordan and other political agents that will halt the construction. Not being able to fulfill the Sharansky-Mandelblit Plan will send the parties back to exam-

ining other alternatives, including giving the WoW an option of praying in the women's section at defined times, or on the upper plaza, or allocating a portion of the historic Wall in favor of the non-Orthodox streams.

## THE ACTION STRATEGIES IN THE DISPUTE

The main actors in the intra-religious challenge posed by the WoW were the WoW themselves and the Official in Charge of the Western Wall. It was also influenced by the government and government officials' attitudes, the representatives of different movements in Judaism in Israel and the United States, and the attitudes of the non-religious public. Analyzing the action strategies used by these parties contributes to a comprehensive understanding of the WoW's achievements and consequently the achievements of the Reform and Conservative movements supported by many American Modern Orthodox members as well.

### 1. The WoW

The WoW's strategy included:

Persistence and determination in arriving at the Wall to pray according to their custom for the duration of 26 years.

Media coverage: The WoW succeeded in garnering public support, especially in the US, by reaching the public through extensive international media coverage and the use of social media. In turn, the North American posts put pressure on the Israeli Prime Minister.<sup>62</sup> However, the WoW were unable to extensively reach the public in Israel, even among the secular public, especially before the twenty-first century.<sup>63</sup> Their opposition in Israel portrayed the WoW a small group of strange and provocative women, most of them English speakers (foreign to the Israeli culture), who represent no one but themselves.

Education and publicity: the WoW made various attempts to attract the public's sympathy through education and publicity actions, but with little success. Up until the 2000s, in which most of the secular public became fed up with the phenomenon of women's exclusion, the WoW did not succeed in attracting this public to their struggle. They failed to clarify to the general public that their struggle also concerns the secular public, as part of the struggle against fanatical religious coercion.

Activity among Orthodox women: the WoW worked to reach Orthodox women and change the norms of discrimination from within the Orthodox religious circles. In 2009, Orthodox women from the Kolech Organization joined the struggle, and two women from Kolech Organization even personally joined the Directorate of the WoW.<sup>64</sup>

Holding Bat Mitzvah ceremonies: the aspiration of the WoW is to organize mass Bat Mitzvah ceremonies to educate and advocate for gender equality in observing Judaism's commandments. A limited number of Bat Mitzvah ceremonies have so far been held as part of the WoW's prayer at Robinson's Arch (and one at the women's section of the Wall), but they have not achieved their main goal. At the time of writing, this activity is only in its beginning stages.

Obtaining support among American Jewry: the WoW acted in two spheres of action—in Israel and North America—in order to obtain public and financial support. In this realm, they have had great success, especially in the recent years.

Turning to the HCJ (High Court of Justice): There are both benefits and risks in turning to a judicial body. The HCJ rulings granted the WoW recognition in principle, but withheld what they had wished to achieve: the right to pray according to their custom in the main women's section. Judge Sobel's ruling changed the public's awareness and attitudes in favor of the WoW's struggle.<sup>65</sup> Meanwhile, the government made two mistakes that led to the WoW's victory in the Jerusalem District Court ruling. The first mistake was the government's omission: it had not managed to construct and equip a proper prayer platform in the area of the antiquities site between the Mughrabi Ascent and Robinson's Arch, and one shared entrance to the Western Wall site. The second mistake was intensifying the enforcement of the Holy Places regulations at the Western Wall, which was accompanied by the arrest of the WoW.

## 2. The Reform and Conservative Movements

The WoW group came out of the Reform movement, the largest Jewish movement in the United States, and holding about 50 synagogues in Israel.<sup>66</sup> Importantly, the interests of the WoW differ from that of the Reform movement as well

as the Conservative movement. While the WoW are struggling for recognition of their right to pray at the women's section, the latter two movements in Israel (supported by their American parent movements) are struggling for state recognition, including receiving a status at the Western Wall. Still, the WoW were forced to "align" with these movements in their mutual interests to receive recognition from the State of Israel and remain an active player in the negotiations over the status of the Western Wall.

The leaders of the Reform movement in Israel did not offer full support for the WoW's objectives. As Rabbi Kariv said, "I am not interested in poking a finger in the Haredim's eye." He continued, "If all you need is 11 hours a year, you are indicating that it is not an acute need, but only a symbol, so have the honor of praying at Robinson's Arch."<sup>67</sup> Nevertheless, Kariv began to support the WoW's struggle as a part of the Reform movement's struggle against the phenomenon of women's exclusion in Israeli religious society.

Kariv believes that in this process, and in the arrangement of the Sharan-sky-Mandelblit Plan, the non-Orthodox movements have made great achievements: clear, legislated recognition of the non-Orthodox streams; state recognition of the extension of the Western Wall area as a prayer zone; the establishment of public council for administering the Southern Western Wall, with representation equally divided between the state and the non-Orthodox streams; and the set-up of an egalitarian, pluralistic prayer administration, and establishing gender equality. He says that with a publicity campaign, the southern part of the Western Wall will become attractive and acceptable to the majority of the public within a decade, as a "separate but equal" alternative.

Despite these agreed-upon arrangements, the Reform movement and WoW feel that "the State is dragging its legs" on the issue of the physical planning due to Rabbi Rabinowitz's objection. Therefore, they set out on a Bat Mitzvah and Torah reading campaign in the women's section, as the WoW had done in October 2014, in order to put pressure on Rabbi Rabinowitz and the government to agree to the details of the requested construction drawings. Kariv calls this "maintaining public vigilance."<sup>68</sup>

The Conservative movement, meanwhile, supports the WoW but differs from them because it seeks to promote mixed prayer, not separate prayer. Nonetheless, the Conservative Movement is of the opinion that the WoW can compromise on a respectable prayer plot in the Robinson's Arch area.<sup>69</sup> In fact, the Conservatives' agreement to pray in the Robinson's Arch area has effectively destroyed the foundation of the WoW's demand to gain a status at the historic Wall.

### 3. The Antiquities Authority

The Antiquities Authority was fundamentally against changes to the Archeological Park, including the erection of any prayer platforms at the expense of accessibility to and viewing of the archeological findings. Nonetheless, as the archeologist Dr. Yuval Baruch admits, the Authority belongs to the government, and the latter can put pressures on the Authority's chair. In this process, the Authority has cooperated with the government by agreeing both to the erection of a small prayer platform for the WoW, as well as to the allocation of the Herodian Road for prayer, as long as it does not disturb the visitors at the place. Since then, pressures to enlarge the prayer platform have increased in several steps, as has the current use of the prayer platform for celebrations. Yuval Baruch claims, "The Archeological Park is in danger."<sup>70</sup> However, as a branch of the government, the Antiquities Authority cannot do much against this trend.

### 4. The Official in Charge of The Western Wall

The Official in Charge of the Western Wall, Rabbi Shmuel Rabinowitz, has, by his very personality and connections, great power in the government's corridors. In April 2013, he spoke before the Knesset committees and explained, "In the recent years I have been under two attacks . . . On the one hand, conservative fanatics—I am being attacked for my energetic activity, for bringing thousands of student groups, for bringing thousands of soldiers to the Wall, groups, which in their opinion, do not follow the spirit of Grandfather Israel [the Jewish People along the generations] . . . on the other hand, liberal fanatics who wish to object to court decisions, or to the status quo at the Western Wall." Eventually, he continued, "we will light the fire of controversy at the Wall."<sup>71</sup> He believes that a hegemonic Orthodox status quo is good for everyone.

When dealing with the challenge of the WoW, Rabinowitz took a series of actions:

Legislation and regulations: after the WoW turned to the HCJ in 1989, the Official in Charge sought to persuade the Minister of Religious Affairs to add a section to the regulations, forbidding religious ceremonies not in accordance with local custom. The government, however, did not accept his recommendation.

Rabbi Rabinowitz also issued an instruction to prevent the WoW from bringing Torah scrolls and reading from the Torah in the women's section. The Torah scrolls that exist at the Western Wall are not avail-

able to the WoW, and that is why they bring a Torah scroll with them, which according to the regulations must remain in a closed bag in the main women's section.

**Tightening the procedures at the Wall Plaza:** Rabbi Rabinowitz tightened the regulations at the Wall Plaza and frequently demanded separation between men and women even at state ceremonies in the upper plaza. For example, the singing of female soldiers at ceremonies for swearing-in IDF soldiers on the upper plaza was also stopped.

**Mobilizing Seminary and Yeshiva student protesters:** In August 2013, 7,000 Seminary girls accepted the rabbis' calls and attended a prayer at the Wall, directed by Rabbi Rabinowitz at the same time of the WoW's Rosh Chodesh prayer. Consequently, the WoW's prayer was prevented, and they were forced to pray in a separate area from Wall.<sup>72</sup> Rabbi Rabinowitz claims that he was not the initiator, but rather, that he was subjected to pressure by the fanatic Ultra-Orthodox Haredim.

**Applying the police:** the Official in Charge has direct authority to request the police's intervention to charge the WoW with violating public order and violating the regulations, and therefore to move them away from the Wall. Rabbi Rabinowitz used this authority as of 2009, leading to the arrest of women from WoW, as well as subsequent media attention and a change in public opinion.

**Development and improvement works:** Rabinowitz acts tirelessly in the area of construction and development to expand the Wall Plaza, both in length and width. Andrew Sacks claims that Rabbi Rabinowitz has moved back (westward) the partition between the lower plaza and the upper plaza in order to enlarge the lower plaza where gender segregation exists, at the expense of the upper plaza.<sup>73</sup> In response to these complaints, Rabbi Rabinowitz states: "I have not made drastic changes, only not letting in musical instruments."<sup>74</sup>

**Orthodox hegemony:** Levi Eshkol's government entrusted the management of the Western Wall with the Orthodox representatives, who possess political power in the Israeli Knesset and in most of the government's coalitions. The government has applied the judicial and law enforcement systems against the WoW, and has acted to move their prayer to the Robinson's Arch area, far away from the sight of the Or-

thodox and Ultra-Orthodox worshippers at the Western Wall. Even as the government has recently been lending a sympathetic ear to pluralism in Judaism and working to reach an acceptable arrangement to the WoW and the three main streams, Prime Minister Netanyahu is limited in his ability to generate radical changes due to the political power of the Ultra-Orthodox political parties.

#### IMPLICATIONS FOR STATUS QUO ARRANGEMENTS

Despite the definite names of the terms "status quo" and "local custom," these do not imply completely frozen situations. The main rationale for maintaining the status quo stems from the fear of the eruption of violence on the part of the hegemonic group at a holy place. Nevertheless, situations change, and even if they lead to acts of violence, a new status quo or custom becomes permanent. In June 1967, the government of Israel decided upon a new situation at the Western Wall, and it continues frequently to determine new situations in other holy places.

The change generated by the WoW can have implications for the status quo at the Temple Mount. In the ruling regarding the WoW's first petition, Supreme Court Justice Menachem Elon stated that in some cases, such as the Temple Mount, maintaining public order is prioritized over freedom of worship. MK Moshe Feiglin, who has been struggling for years to make free entrance and prayer of Jews at the Temple Mount possible, requested to stop carrying out arrests of the WoW while speaking "as one who has also been arrested for the transgression of trying to pray . . . at the Temple Mount." He added: "The Western Wall is a national site, a national heritage site, it belongs to the entire Jewish People, and obviously, one should allow Jews who want to pray in it to pray in it as they wish."<sup>75</sup>

Jewish prayer at the Temple Mount and the prayer of the WoW are not at the same level of risk to public safety. This is perhaps the reason that the WoW have received the court's recognition of their right to pray according to their special custom. Police protection of the WoW's prayer for the duration of one hour per month is not perceived as a burden that the police cannot handle. Nonetheless, changing the status quo in the matter of the WoW is a legal and political precedent whose importance, in my opinion, cannot be overstated. It is possible that in the future it will influence changes in the arrangement of rights and their fulfillment at the Temple Mount/Al-Haram al-Sharif compound and other places, such as the Room of the Last Supper above King David's Tomb.

## CONCLUSION

The WoW's quarter-century struggle is the outcome of a successful political idea that crystallized out of the experience of violence that religious feminists experienced when they arrived on December 1988 at the Western Wall to pray with a Torah scroll. Anat Hoffman's political idea could be viewed as "bringing an idol into the Temple" of Orthodoxy. Under the auspices of the civil law, the WoW have succeeded in obtaining recognition from the courts for adding a new local custom to the hegemonic Orthodox status quo, thereby making an opening for a pluralistic approach within the historic Wall Plaza. Thus, the WoW, which began as a small group with tens of women, have succeeded where the Reform and Conservative movements in Israel have failed. This success has strengthened the national pan-Jewish character of the Western Wall space, and helped to restore the power of the civil system—the government and the courts.

Even beyond this important legal achievement, the WoW had two major political achievements: first, enlisting and consolidating American Jewry to support their demands in order to gain state recognition at the Western Wall; second, unifying the the Reform, Conservative, and WoW movements within the framework of serious negotiations with the Israeli government to gain a recognized status at the Western Wall. Ironically, it is precisely these impressive political achievements that have contributed to the WoW's major resignation of power, as they had 'to align' with and compromise on the more modest interests of the Reform and Conservative Movements.

By doing so, the WoW sacrificed their revolutionary goal. They were forced to relinquish prayer at the stronghold of Orthodoxy and move southward "with all due respect" to a more inferior plot, Robinson's Arch, far away from the eyes of the Orthodox worshippers. They lost a central part of their identity as activists demanding change within the Orthodoxy, and they were forced to "reinvent themselves" as organizers of egalitarian Bat Mitzvah ceremonies at the Wall. The WoW have aspired to create a revolution in the perception of women's status within the religious system, and do this precisely in the "Temple of Orthodoxy" at the Western Wall. By contrast, the major interest of the Reform and Conservative movements was to gain state acknowledgement as recognized Jewish movements alongside the Orthodox at the Wall.

One can understand the WoW organization as the forerunner who paved the road to American-Jewish pressure on the Israeli government in favor of the

non-Orthodox streams; however, once they had succeeded in their mission, they were forced to sacrifice the main justification for their existence.

It is still difficult to estimate the magnitude of the WoW's achievement. They have bequeathed the idea of "a woman wrapped in a tallit" and a woman reading from the Torah. However, it is unclear whether, and to what extent, the WoW have succeeded in spreading their idea among conservative Orthodox women watching them during their prayer in the women's section, and to what extent the media tumult has assisted this dissemination in Orthodox circles. Yet, certainly they influenced Modern Orthodox observants due to the fact that many of them supported their struggle. It is also unclear whether it will be possible to implement Sharansky's compromise, and if so, what its effect will be on the WoW's activity. If the WoW will be forced to pray at Robinson's Arch, will they succeed in bringing mass Bat Mitzvah ceremonies to the Wall? Or, once there is a solution, will the challenge disappear and with it, the supporters of the WoW?

The WoW's success in their struggle has created a precedent and a model to be imitated regarding the possibility of breaking a status quo at a holy place in favor of a discriminated-against minority group, in the name of the civil-legal norm of freedom of access and freedom of worship at holy places. Until recently it has been accepted that the existing situation named the "status quo" or "local custom" is "sacred" and must be strictly enforced. These arrangements perpetuate the old balance of power and the conservatism and hegemony of one religious group. They force the discrimination of minority groups at holy places that are open to all, which are worshipped by the members of different religious communities.

In June 1967, the government of Israel created a new status quo at the Western Wall, which transferred the Wall and the grand plaza to exclusive Jewish religious and national use. In the past quarter century, the WoW have broken this status quo at this site. The case in question is not a dispute between two religions, or two nationalities, but rather, an intra-Jewish, gender-oriented egalitarian dispute over the way of religious worship and women's rights in religion and society. It is probable that the important precedent of the recognition of the WoW's new local custom will have an influence on status quo arrangements at other controversial places, first and foremost, on the Temple Mount (Al-Haram Al-Sharif). The WoW's legal and political achievement challenges the general principle of a status quo at holy places, making it more flexible and challengeable in a multicultural society within the framework of a contemporary Western democracy.

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## NOTES

1. Appeal by the State of Israel 43832-42-33; HCJ 2512/87.
2. Barzilai, "The Political and Legal Culture in Israel."
3. Hassner, "To Halve and to Hold"; Atran et al., "Sacred Bounds"; Atran and Axelrod, "Reframing Sacred Values."
4. Reiter, "Contest and Co-habitation."
5. Shakdiel, "The Women of the Wall."
6. Charmé, "The Political Transformation."
7. Lahav, "The Woes of WoW"; "The Women of the Wall."
8. Jovani and Perez, "Women of the Wall."
9. See, e.g., Susser and Cohen, *Israel and the Politics of Jewish Identity*; Perez, "The Limits of Liberal Toleration."
10. Ben Dov, Naor, and Aner, *HaKotel*.
11. Interview with Rabinowitz.
12. HCJ 257/89.
13. Shakdiel, "The Women of the Wall."
14. Lori, "It Interrupts the Wall."
15. Raday, "Demand for Equality," 405.
16. Judy Maltz, "The New Orthodox Face of Women of the Wall," *Haaretz*, April 1, 2013; on financial support: interview with Director of the WOW association, Leslie Sachs, Dec. 9, 2014.
17. Tavory, "HaYahadut HaReformit."
18. Shakdiel, "The Women of the Wall."
19. Raday, "Demand for Equality."
20. Interview with Haberman.
21. Interview with Hoffman.
22. Interview with Raday.
23. Raday, "Demand for Equality."
24. Raz, *The Rabbi of the Wall*, 241-42.
25. HCJ—Additional Hearing 4128/00, 5.
26. HCJ 257/89.

27. Chesler and Haut, *Women of the Wall*.
28. "Regulations for Safeguarding Places Holy to the Jews: 1981."
29. HCJ 257/89.
30. HCJ—Additional Hearing 4128/00, 14.
31. *Ibid.*
32. Chesler and Haut, *Women of the Wall*, 384.
33. HCJ—Additional Hearing 4128/00.
34. *Ibid.*, 27.
35. HCJ—Additional Hearing 4128/00.
36. *Ibid.*
37. Knesset Committee, *Minutes*, 23; Interview with Sacks.
38. Interview with Cidor.
39. Hasson, "Reason for Arrest."
40. Nachshoni, "A Female Worshipper."
41. Hasson, "The Struggle Against the WOW Intensifies."
42. *Ibid.*
43. Interview with Hanna Kehat, Nov. 24, 2014.
44. Azulay, "Female MKs Wear Prayer Shawls."
45. Koritz, "Women of the Wall."
46. Ettinger, "The Women of the Wall's Compromise."
47. Nachshoni and Dvir, "The Court."
48. Appeal by the State of Israel (Jerusalem) HCJ 23834-04-13; Nachshoni, "The HCJ Did Not Prohibit."
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51. Gilhar, "Riot at the Western Wall."
52. *JTA*, "Western Wall Rabbi to Haredi Girls."
53. Nachshoni, "For the First Time."
54. Dvir, "Haredim Vandalized Buses."
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56. Sokol, Sharon, and Eisenbud, "Sharansky Proposes Egalitarian Section."
57. Ettinger, "The Women of the Wall's Compromise."
58. Chesler, "The Unwavering Dream."
59. Scheiman, "The Rabbi of the Wall: Supports a Compromise."
60. Interview with Rabinowitz.
61. Interview with Sachs.
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63. Lahav, "The Woes of WoW," 16.
64. Interview with Kehat.
65. Israel Democracy Institute, "With Court Ruling."
66. Interview with Kariv.
67. Interview with Kariv.
68. Interview with Kariv.
69. Interview with Sacks.
70. Interview with Baruch.

71. Knesset Committee, *Minutes*, 23.
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