



Sichot beyn Achayot: An Open Dialogue Between Sisters

Rabbi Debra Cantor, B'nai Tikvoh-Sholom, Bloomfield, CT



***Barukh atah Adonai Eloheinu melekh ha'olam asher kid'shanu
b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu la'asok b'divrei Torah.***

**Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe,
who has made our lives holy with Your mitzvot,
and commanded us to engage with the words of Torah.**

**Think about a time when you
experienced God's Presence...**

Where were you?

Who was with you?

What comes to mind when you think about a holy place?

מקום קדוש

Holy Space/Place

Parashat Vayetzei ~ Genesis Chapter 28



16 Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely the LORD is in this place, and I did not know it." 17 And he was afraid and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."

וַיִּקַּץ יַעֲקֹב מִשְׁנָתוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר אֵינִן יֵשׁ ה' בַּמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה

וְאֲנֹכִי לֹא יָדַעְתִּי:

וַיֵּרָא וַיֹּאמֶר מִה־נֹרָא הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה

אֵין זֶה כִּי אִם־בֵּית אֱלֹהִים וְזֶה שַׁעַר הַשָּׁמַיִם:

EXODUS 25:8

וַעֲשׂוּ לִי מִקְדָּשׁ וְשָׁכַנְתִּי בְּתוֹכָם:

And let them make Me a sanctuary
that I may dwell among them.



THE KOTEL: WHAT IS IT?



‘The Wailing Wall’

***“Rav Acha said: The
Divine Presence will never depart from the Kotel”***

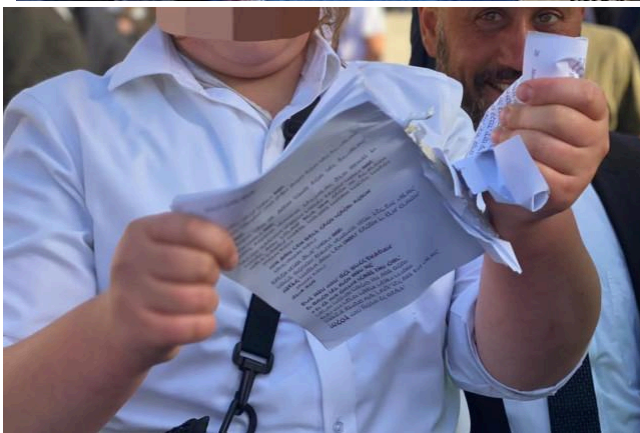
– Exodus Rabbah 2:2

***“The kotel, moss and sadness. The kotel, lead and blood.
There are people with a heart of stone.
There are stones with a human heart.”***

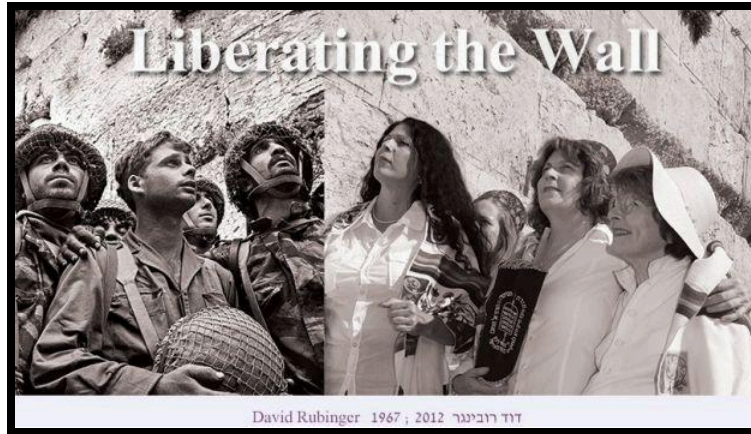
– From the song “HaKotel,” composed by D. Zeltser & Y. Gamzu, 1967



Davenning with Women of the Wall



DOES THE KOTEL NEED TO BE “LIBERATED” AGAIN?



DETAINED AT

THE KOTEL:

MY EXPERIENCE 8 YEARS AGO

Local Rabbi is One of 10 Women Arrested at Western Wall in Jerusalem

Debra Cantor of B'nai Tikvoh-Sholom on the West Hartford/Bloomfield line, was arrested Monday morning.

Posted Mon, Feb 11, 2013 at 11:07 pm ET|Updated Wed, Feb 13, 2013 at 6:52 pm ET

On Monday, My Rabbi Was Arrested
Mark Silk/Religious News Service

by

That would Rabbi Debra Cantor, who presides over B'nai Tikvoh-Sholom in Bloomfield, Connecticut. She was participating in the monthly gathering of Women at the Wall (WOW), an organization dedicated to the proposition that adult Jewish women have the right to wear prayer shawls and read from the Torah (a liturgical practice traditionally reserved to adult Jewish men) at the Western Wall of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.



REACTIONS: “We’re so proud of you, Rabbi!” AND “We don’t care about the Kotel.”



Is the fuss over the Kotel a “side issue” or not? How important is the Kotel symbolically or strategically? What happens when politics and holiness converge?

ISSUES TO CONSIDER:

- *Halacha/Jewish Law vs. Israeli Law; Church/State
- *Authority: Police, Rabbis, City, Supreme Court, the PM
- *Internal Israeli matter vs. a concern of entire Jewish people
- **Tzedek* – Civil rights vs. Respecting *Minhag HaMakom*
- *Is the Kotel Judaism’s holiest site? A tourist attraction?
- An Ultra-orthodox synagogue? *Avodah Zarah*/Idolatry?
- *Is the Kotel controversy part of a growing trend to marginalize women in Israel?

ROBINSON’S ARCH/THE EGALITARIAN/FAMILY KOTEL/EZRAT YISRAEL



(left) The renewed construction on the egalitarian prayer space at the Western Wall on Monday, Feb. 5, 2018
Ezrat Yisrael/"Family Kotel: Praying near the fallen boulders from the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE

(right)



*"What a great wonder that we should be able to draw so near to God in prayer.
How many walls there are between human beings and God!
Even though God fills all the world, God is so very hidden!*

Yet a single word of prayer can topple all the walls and bring you close to God."

[Likkutim Yekarim 2b, quoted by Arthur Green and Barry Holtz in Your Word Is Fire]