

Barbara AB Symons    Rabbi  
Jason Z. Edelstein    Rabbi Emeritus

October 22, 2012

Mr. Malcolm Hoenlein  
Executive Vice Chairman of the Conference of Presidents  
Yitzhak Rabin Way  
800 Second Avenue, 16<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10017

Dear Mr. Hoenlein,

Thank you for your good wishes as we enter 5773. You sent me a poster which you asked me to post and "which is a part of our joint efforts to strengthen ties between Israel and American Jewry." The photo was of the crowds of men at the kotel praying and talking.

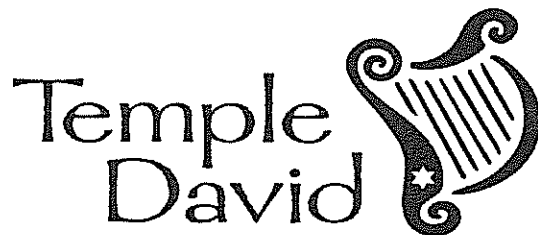
I love Israel and I will bring another group to Israel in the near future.

I am sorry to tell you, however, that I will not post your good wishes. The disparity of treatment of men and women at the kotel means that when I led a group of congregants to Israel and we went to the kotel, we on the women's side had to wait our turn to get a few precious moments to place a note or say a prayer, unlike the men who had plenty of space and therefore plenty of time. We knew that we were not allowed to wear our tallitot, unlike the men. We knew that we could not raise our voices in song, unlike the men. We knew that we could be detained at the Western Wall for disturbing the public peace according to regulation 201 A4 of the Israeli legal code or breaking regulation 287A by performing a religious act that "offends the feelings of others." The punishment for these crimes is, as you know, respectively six months and up to two years in prison.

Strengthening ties between Israel and American Jewry isn't done through colorful posters. Next year, I invite you to send me a photo of the Western Wall Heritage Council, made up of men and women, Orthodox and Liberal standing together in front of the kotel. That poster, I will proudly display.

L'shalom,

Barbara AB Symons, Rabbi



Barbara AB Symons    Rabbi  
Jason Z. Edelstein    Rabbi Emeritus

October 22, 2012

Mr. Haim Gutin  
Israel Tourism Commissioner  
Of North & South America  
Yitzhak Rabin Way  
800 Second Avenue, 16<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10017

Dear Mr. Gutin,


Thank you for your good wishes as we enter 5773. You sent me a poster which you asked me to post and "which is a part of our joint efforts to strengthen ties between Israel and American Jewry." The photo was of the crowds of men at the kotel praying and talking.

I love Israel and I will bring another group to Israel in the near future.

I am sorry to tell you, however, that I will not post your good wishes. The disparity of treatment of men and women at the kotel means that when I led a group of congregants to Israel and we went to the kotel, we on the women's side had to wait our turn to get a few precious moments to place a note or say a prayer, unlike the men who had plenty of space and therefore plenty of time. We knew that we were not allowed to wear our tallitot, unlike the men. We knew that we could not raise our voices in song, unlike the men. We knew that we could be detained at the Western Wall for disturbing the public peace according to regulation 201 A4 of the Israeli legal code or breaking regulation 287A by performing a religious act that "offends the feelings of others." The punishment for these crimes is, as you know, respectively six months and up to two years in prison.

Strengthening ties between Israel and American Jewry isn't done through colorful posters. Next year, I invite you to send me a photo of the Western Wall Heritage Council, made up of men and women, Orthodox and Liberal standing together in front of the kotel. That poster, I will proudly display.

L'shalom,



Barbara AB Symons, Rabbi