

# Timeline of the Kotel

950 BCE

Construction of the First Temple.

586 BCE

Destruction of the First Temple.

515 BCE

Construction of the Second Temple.

70 CE

Destruction of the Second Temple.

1655

First mention of group prayer at the Kotel.

1839

The leader of the Moroccan Quarter opposite the Kotel complains about large numbers of Jews coming and the fact that they “caused annoyance by raising their voices as if the place were a synagogue.”

1887

A special women’s prayer ceremony at the Kotel in honor of the visit of Queen Victoria.

1911

Arab residents complain that Jews should not be allowed to bring chairs in order to sit but, rather, ought to stand during their visits, “lest in the future Jews claim ownership of the place.”

September 23, 1928

British soldiers interrupt Yom Kippur services in order to take down the Mechtiza made for the holiday and take out the benches brought there.

August 15, 1929

On Tisha B'av, the Betar Youth Movement organizes a protest demonstration at the Kotel. The Mufti then organizes counter-demonstrations at the Kotel and on the Temple Mount and spreads the lie that the Jews are desecrating the Muslim holy sites. On August 23, the Arabs begin to riot and subsequently murder 133 Jews and injure 340 in Jerusalem, Hebron, Safed and elsewhere.

January 1930

The League of Nations appoints a commission to resolve the problem of the Kotel.

Cyrus Adler, President of the Jewish Theological Seminary, presents the Jewish side to the League of Nations commission. In his testimony he also suggests: "Recognizing that the Kotel is a Holy Place not simply for the Jews who reside in Jerusalem or Palestine, but for the Jews in the entire world, [it is recommended] that the Rabbinate of Jerusalem may from time to time associate with the Rabbinate of the rest of the world in framing rules for the regulation of these services."

1930

First appointment of the Rabbi of the Kotel.

May 14, 1948

Control of the Kotel passes from the British to the Jordanians, who bar all Jews from the area.

June 7, 1967

Israel Regains Control of the Kotel

Immediately after the war, the Arab Maghreb (North African) Quarter abutting the Kotel is demolished to create a large public plaza to accommodate the anticipated crowds of Jews converging there.

June 16, 1967

The Knesset passes the “Protection of Holy Places Law 5727, 1967” which authorizes the Chief Rabbis of Israel to set the rules and regulations of the Kotel.

An estimated two million people visit the Kotel in the first six weeks after the war.

July 19<sup>th</sup>, 1967

The Ministry of Religion erects a mehitzah where the men’s section is four times larger than the women’s section. This leads to a public outcry and Prime Minister Levi Eshkol called the area *mikhlaot* [=pens or prisons].

September 1967

The Kotel Plaza is used for military swearing-in ceremonies.

November 1967

Previously located in a narrow, twenty-foot alley, the Kotel is enlarged by unearthing two more rows of stones, in effect making it eight feet taller than it had been before. Four hundred years’ worth of pilgrims had earlier touched rows of stone that were now well out of reach to new visitors to the Kotel.

April 1968

Ministry of Religion sets up *Mishmar Hakotel*, the Kotel Guard, whose members wear special uniforms.

December 1<sup>st</sup>, 1988

First International Jewish Feminist Conference held in Jerusalem. One hundred Jewish women gather for a prayer service and Torah reading at the Kotel. The service is disrupted by verbal and physical assaults from some ultra-Orthodox men and women at the site.

March 1989

An appeal by to the Supreme Court by 4 women

May 1989

A temporary restraining order for six months forbids women praying at the Kotel wearing a Tallit or reading the Torah.

December 31, 1989

The law of protection of the holy places is changed and now declares that it is forbidden to pray at the Kotel in any way different than “the custom of the place”.

March 5, 1997

Shas party attempts to pass a law turning the Kotel from a national monument to a synagogue.

2000

The Supreme Court asserts the issue must not be decided by court ruling, and obligates the Government of Israel to solve the issue within 6 months.

2003

Supreme Court rules that Women of the Wall should pray at Robinson's Arch, on condition that the space is made accessible within 12 months. If it is not, the Government should accommodate Women of the Wall at the Kotel itself.