

Transcript of Sally Gottesman's 1974 letter to the ritual committee of Temple Shomrei Emunah, requesting a Saturday morning Bat Mitzvah.

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen of the Ritual Committee,

Next year I will have reached the age of my Bat Mitzvah and would like to have it on a Saturday morning.

This means a great deal to me because since women play an important part of every role in Jewish life, why is my part in our Temple not equal to a boy's my age? This service may be strange to tradition for a little while but my question is "*Im lo achshav ay ma-tai?*"¹ My education is as complete as a boy my age. And knowing that I am an equal makes me want to continue my studies. Knowing I can't fully participate in any activity, when can I hope to achieve a first class status?

I would greatly appreciate if the Ritual Committee would change this practice and let girls be called to the Torah.

Very Truly Yours,
Sally Gottesman

Credit: Courtesy of Sally Gottesman.

¹Translation: "If not now, when?" This famous saying from the sage Hillel appears in *Pirkei Avot* (Ethics of the Fathers, a section of *Mishna*).