

Proposal for Amendment to the
Constitution of the International Israelite Board of Rabbis, Inc.
(Fourth Draft)

On this 5th day of February, 2012, I, Rabbi Baruch A. Yehudah, do hereby propose the following amendment.

Preamble- It is my sincere prayer that my thoughts and actions in proposing this amendment in no way will deviate from the prescribed culture of our people as set for the by the Holy One, Blessed be He. I further pray that this will not cause an unwelcomed shift in the paradigm of our redemption as a nation and community before HaShem.

*In this proposal I hope to make the room for those fastidious, studious, honorable women in our community to bring forth the intelligence and wisdom **with which** the Most High has endowed them for the benefit of the entire community.*

*As a premise, we must first deal with the understanding of equality. Many may disagree, however the Book of Elohim gives equality of men and women under its laws and judgments without any intervention from mankind whatsoever. The modern dilemma is that equality has been redefined as a word that **implies** a state of being that says we are exactly alike; this is incorrect. The law does not change for the reward of the righteous or the consequences of disobedience based on gender; this is equality. However, the laws and customs of our people are specific as far as the roles of the genders among our people. We have been established by the Most High as a patriarchal society. We find evidence of it all through the Torah and Scriptures that are too numerous to list, however I will **cite** a few. The leadership of our people was first established as a theocracy and later became a theocratic monarchy, where **the principal offices of both** are men. The Torah gives the man the right to rule his home, even giving him the authority to break vows that are between his wife and the Creator without her consent. Finally in the book of Genesis the All Holy says that man would rule over women. This however does not negate the fact that culturally we were not an oppressive people when we functioned in righteousness. We see the evidence that women were a valued part of our societal structure. It was not only in obedience and disobedience that we find equality of consequences, but also in judicial, cultural, and*

business matters as well. In the matters of the daughters of Zelophchad, we see that these citizens, who happened to be women, recognized that inheritance lies with men and they needed to know how the inheritance of a man who died with no male heirs would be treated. They were not trying to usurp or discontinue the laws of inheritance laid out in the Torah. The remarkable thing that took place was that the petition of the daughters of Zelophchad made it to the highest court in the land without the intervention of men. Although they had to be given leave to do so by the various levels of magistrates of their tribe, the women continued to have the right to present their own case throughout the proceedings.

In Proverbs 31 we find that a valiant woman was described as industrious, family-oriented and possessed with business acumen on which her husband relied and trusted. It was these attributes that enhanced her husband's reputation in the community.

That having been said, we must seek a balance that will bear scrutiny and remedy under all preceding and present paradigms, discarding ideologies that assign women to menial and subjugated roles in our society and adopting those that will establish women as equal contributors to the social, economic, intellectual, and theological foundations of our society.

As we look at the history of the rabbinate, we find that it began as a method to preserve and perpetuate the wisdom and knowledge of the priests and educated class of our people. The Great Assembly was the recipient of a long line of instruction and from thence the academies were born. The men so situated clearly became stand-ins for the lost priesthood. This is recognized by the fact that they became the ones who would manage the ecumenical needs of the community, including some of the duties that were prescribed for the priest, i.e., redemptions and other rituals.

With this understanding, this proposal seeks to find the balance that the Torah and our history gives us as a template for the establishment of an Israelite society. I pray that HaShem will guide us all in this endeavor so that the egos of men or the egos of women will not cause us to circumvent the right and just implementation of a godly society.

The following represents the proposed rights, responsibilities, and formal relationship of women to the International Israelite Board of Rabbis.

- I. The International Israelite Board of Rabbis shall recognize any woman who has attended the Israelite Academy or any other institution of rabbinical training recognized by the International Israelite Board of Rabbis.
 - a. Upon recognition, a woman may be admitted as a member of the IIBoR if she meets the high moral standards and character set forth by the IIBoR.
 - b. She must acknowledge and swear that she recognizes and worships the G-D of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob only.
 - c. She must swear that she accepts only the 'Tanach' as the word of G-D, and that all other texts are only study materials and/or history.
 - d. She must swear that only Old Testament figures will be regarded as prophets of the Most High.
 - e. She must be a woman of at least 30 years of age.
 - f. She must have a recommendation from a member of the Board, if she did not attend the Israelite Rabbinical Academy.
 - g. She must be a dues paying, participating member of a congregation in the community of the International Israelite Board of Rabbis.
- II. Women who shall be admitted shall bear the title of Rabbah or Morah Din.
- III. No woman admitted to the Board shall convene or conduct services of a congregation of both men and women. If there is a boy of age to lead prayer and do Kiddush, it will be his responsibility to conduct the service. This rule however, will not prevent a women from presenting a devar torah or derashah in a mixed group.
 - a. Likewise no woman shall preside over any rituals that are currently included in rabbinical practice which are remnants of

those things done by the priests, i.e. redemptions or other prescribed rituals.

- IV. No woman shall attend any service or holyday celebration during her nidah period.
- V. Ascension to the Bima shall remain the prerogative of the respective congregations, however, every congregation affiliated with the IIBoR shall ensure that the best accommodations are provided for our female counterparts that affords them the highest respect due to their office.
 - a. Regarding the reading of Torah; the Rabbah or Morah Din shall follow the customs of the host congregation, albeit no member shall make aliyah during her nidah period.
 - b. Further, only those who have passed the nidah age may read from a Sefer Torah that has been dedicated to holiness and service in a congregation.
- VI. A position of Second Vice-President may be created that can be filled by a Rabbah or Morah Din to allow a woman's voice in the executive committee regarding women's issues. However the female members of this board shall not be eligible to be on the Board of Directors, or hold the offices of the Vice-President, President, or Chief Rabbi.
 - a. In respect to voting for these offices and or constitutional amendments, the Rabbah/Morah Din shall vote in order of seniority, (according to time as a member of the IIBoR), up until a number reached that will not exceed in percentage the number of their male counterparts minus one.
- VII. A Rabbah/Morah Din may serve in any official capacity of the Israelite Academy except for the office of the Dean.
- VIII. As members of the Beth Din a Rabbah/Morah Din shall be eligible to preside over a court of one or three if assigned to by the Administrative Justice.
 - a. No Rabbah/Morah Din shall serve as Administrative Justice, Av Beth Din or Nasi of the court.

NOTE: THESE CHANGES TO OUR CURRENT PARADIGM SHALL BE ACCEPTED AS LANDMARKS AND SHALL NOT BE ELIGIBLE FOR ALTERATION BY THIS OR ANY SUBSEQUENT MEMBERSHIP OF THIS BODY NOW OR IN FUTURE TIMES. THESE IDEALS SHALL BE HELD SACRED.

IF THERE SHALL BE A CHIEF RABBI, HE SHALL HAVE THE RIGHT TO RESCIND THESE ALTERATIONS IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN THE ORIGINAL INTENTIONS AND GOALS OF THIS BODY. HOWEVER, SHOULD HE DO THIS, THE ALTERATIONS MAY NOT BE REINTRODUCED FOR 10 YEARS. IF ANY RABBINITE/ MOROTE DIN SHALL REMAIN AT THE TIME OF THE RESCINDING OF THESE CHANGES BY THE CHIEF RABBI, UNLESS THEY THEMSELVES HAVE VIOLATED ANY RULES OR REGULATIONS, THEY SHALL BE ABLE TO CONTINUE IN THEIR OFFICES FOR THE DURATION OF THEIR LIVES.