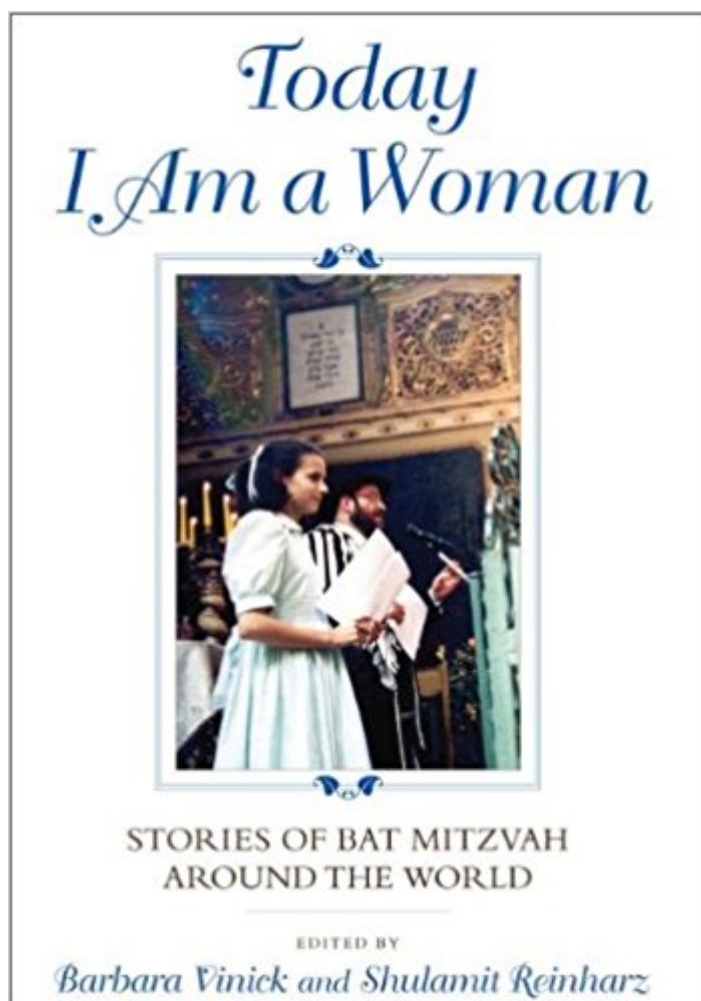


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# Today I Am A Woman: Stories Of Bat Mitzvah Around The World



## Synopsis

Recollections of the first bat mitzvah at the only synagogue in Indonesia, a poignant bat mitzvah memory of World War II Italy, and an American bat mitzvah shared with girls in a Ukrainian orphanage—these are a few of the resonant testimonies about the transition from Jewish girl to Jewish woman collected in *Today I Am a Woman*. Introduced by brief biographical notes and descriptions of Jewish communities around the world, these stories reveal how Judaism defines this important rite of passage in a girl's life in widely disparate settings. The contributions are from bat mitzvah girls of the past and present, their parents, communities, and religious leaders. Including evocative family photos—some recent, some from decades past—this rich compilation is an ideal gift for bat mitzvah celebrants, their families, and friends.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"The stories speak for themselves, putting Jewish girls and women on the center of the stage, into the limelight, and at the pulpit. By showcasing ritual innovation, they make a point about Judaism's elasticity and women's agency." —Hasia R. Diner, coeditor of *Remembering the Lower East Side* (IUP, 2000) "A vital book that documents the revolution that has transformed the role that Jewish women play in the public life of the Jewish people in our day.... It is a joy to turn its pages." —Rabbi David Ellenson, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion "Americans undoubtedly think they know what a bat mitzvah is. *Today I Am a Woman* will surprise them with its fascinating array of compelling accounts of what it meant for Jewish girls to come of age. The editors scoured the globe to find powerful, varied, and moving depictions of bat mitzvah in the contemporary Jewish

world. This is a rich resource for anyone interested in understanding religious diversity, folk practices, and cultural creativity through the lens of gender." âDeborah Dash Moore, University of Michigan, co-editor of *Women and Gender in Jewish History* (IUP, 2010)"[*Today I Am a Woman*] is a worthy and inspiring read, regardless of which stream of Judaism one adheres to." âThe Jewish Standard

The narratives may center around the bat mitzvah itself, but in the process we learn about Jewish life in widely different Jewish communities around the world, about what it means to become an adult woman, and most important, about the power of a ritual that far too many American Jewish families understand as simply an opportunity to have a party. The photos scattered throughout are endearing.

USCJ Bookshelf""*Today I Am A Woman*' would not only be a lovely gift for a bat mitzvah girl or a useful purchase for anyone preparing for a bat mitzvah celebration in the family; it will also be a welcome addition to the libraries of readers seeking to understand variations in bat mitzvah practices among Jewish communities" â*Nashim: Jrnl Jewish Wmns Std & Gender Is*"[Vinick and Reinharz] capture the amazing tales of Jewish girls on six different continents who celebrate the Jewish ritual of becoming a woman. Illustrated with over 100 black and white family photographs, readers will enjoy the accompanying narratives of each woman's unique journey and celebration into womanhood." âThe Jewish Journal"

*Today I Am a Woman* is filled with lyrical accounts of being a bat mitzvah in such exotic places as Cochabamba, Bolivia, and Tegucigalpa, Honduras.... All the vignettes are accompanied by a well-researched history of the Jewish community in the area." âJewish Book Council"

These testimonies constitute the incredible story of our people: the vast richness of Diaspora Jewry; the importance of family, community, and rabbis everywhere... ; the value of new expectations, as girls, even shy ones, rise to meet them. The book tells about the importance of bat mitzvah in an age of intermarriage, in a world of feminism, tradition, and change.... You will surely read this book as I did, through laughter and tears and the sweep of emotions about your own Jewish identity, the joy and pride and vulnerability of being a Jew." âBlu Greenberg, author of *On Women and Judaism*

Barbara Vinick is affiliated with the Hadassah-Brandeis Institute at Brandeis University, where she has studied gendered rituals in Jewish communities worldwide. Shulamit Reinharz is the Jacob S. Potofsky Professor of Sociology at Brandeis University, where she is Director of the Hadassah-Brandeis Institute. Her publications include *American Jewish Women and the Zionist Enterprise*, *Jewish Intermarriage around the World*, and *The JGirls' Guide*.

This is a second time I am reading through this book, as I consider it as a present. So beautifully

written, one can feel each writer's story. This book is wonderful for adults going through Bat Mitzvah journey as well as for a 12 year old. Thank you to Barbara Vinick for this endeavor. There is such a need for our voices (1) to be heard and, (2) to be part of the teachings in our beautiful and wise tradition.

Interesting book with true stories from all over the world. It shows the two editors spent several years and a lot of effort in collecting the different testimonies. I ordered the book right before Thanksgiving and got it, as I requested, two days after I placed my order.

Very interesting from a Jewish point of view

Great book. Well written and full of interesting things about Bat Mitzvah all over the world.

Excellent Bat Mitzvah present for any age. I would especially recommend this book for adult women. I gave it to a woman who received her Bat Mitzvah at 71 years old!

I highly recommend this unique book that contains accounts from all over the world describing the different manners to celebrate one single event that is: Bat Mitzvah of our precious daughters.

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