



THE JWC NEW MOON

Tishrei 5771
September 2010

Thoughts in Anticipation of the New Year

by Malke Frank

And so we meet again. At the beginning of another New Year when we are once again tempted to begin anew. This is a beautiful tradition of Judaism – a special date each year in the calendar when we are beckoned to focus on ourselves, when time is spent exclusively on examining that person in the mirror. However, temptations can also be dangerous endeavors. You never know the consequences; you never can anticipate the process or the progress. And what if the ends do not indeed justify the means? So why do we return each year? Why do we sing, “Chadeish yameinu k’kedem?” (Renew our days as before). These are questions that do not have a “one size fits all” answer. Each of us holds within us our unique and personal answer, that ever-present existential search of who we are, who we want to be, and why, and how. To re-new, to re-direct, to re-envision, to re-fresh, to re-dedicate.

Wisdom has taught that if we don’t go forward, we stagnate. Think of all the changes that you have personally made or even those that have been made for you by others or by circumstances. Because of those changes, you are today the person you have become. And continue to become.

Recently, I have been reading an issue of Havruta, a magazine published by the Shalom Hartman Institute whose theme is “Thinking about Women.” Talk about change! Talk about temptation! In her essay “Feminist Redemption,” Rachel Adler asked the question, “How many people have lived to see an old world give way to a new one?” Even though these new worlds bring new freedoms and new questions, they also bring new opportunities and new complications. She continued, “The women of my generation (she was born in 1943) grew up in a world in which women were peripheral Jews, facilitating Jewish practice for men while being excluded from most of the positive, communal activities that sanctified Jewish life.” Hers was the “first generation of Jewish feminists who thirsted to enter into the richness of a tradition generally not accessible to women.” In the early days of feminine scholarship, it was a thrill to see any mention of a Jewish woman, or to read about a new ritual specifically for a woman, or to witness women being counted in a minyan. Today, we celebrate the retirement in 2006 of

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Sally Priesand, who in 1972, became the first woman to be ordained as a rabbi in the United States. Today, the word “woman” is omitted when referring to rabbis. Today, we can read and study from The Torah: A Women’s Commentary. And today, there are articles written and surveys undertaken to understand the role of men in Jewish life, now that women are the rule, rather than the exception to it.

Temptation and change. In the life of each of us individually, we have been effected by the larger world of Jewish feminism, and in our lives as members of the Jewish

[cont’d on p. 5]

JWC PROGRAM CALENDAR: 5771 (2010-2011)

In our 5771 programming, we attempt to do two possibly mutually exclusive things at once—highlighting what we think are JWC special strengths while at the same time acknowledging (the good news) that we no longer are a lone voice insisting that Jewish women's experiences be taken seriously.

As Malke says in her article on page 1, we have lived to see an old world turn into a new one. When the JWC first held its Women's Pesach Seders year ago, we were the only show in town and often had 50 or more attendees at our seders. Now, many congregations host similar events that are seen as "of course what we do at Passover." In the early years, there were not many places to turn in Pittsburgh to find women actively involved in liturgy, creation of new and meaningful rituals, and reinterpretation of traditional texts and themes informed by women's experiences—other than the JWC. Women rabbis were few and far between in the country and in Pittsburgh. And, yet, here we are today—a time in which women's experiences are integrated into mainstream Jewish life and women rabbis are just called rabbis, without the female adjective to set them off as something unusual and unexpected. So, where is the role for the JWC in the second decade of the 21st century?

This year, we are doing two things. We are reducing our number of programs from 13 (with 2 do-it-for-yourself Rosh Hodesh communications sent via e-mail) to 10 (with 6 DIFY "events"). We think this makes sense in light of all the other wonderful programming that's going on in the city. But we are also going with our strengths. We continue our efforts to connect with Jewish women and women's organizations in Pittsburgh. After our lovely and meaningful Tashlich program in September, now past, our next program at Rosh Hodesh Cheshvan is meant to help us reconnect with our own JWC friends. Cheshvan is often known as "Mar Cheshvan," meaning "bitter Cheshvan" because there are no holidays in that month. Help us make it Sweet Cheshvan instead this year as we come together for one of our scrumptious pot-luck dinners, meaningful programming, and conversation with old and new friends.

Another kind of connection: we are again holding joint programs with Beth Shalom Sisterhood and Temple Sinai's Rosh Hodesh group and hope to have a program in the spring with the Beth El women's group, yet to be confirmed. We connect with older members of our community at our second annual Hanukkah celebration at Riverview. Last year was a great success! We hope to see you there this year.

In November, we bring back an old favorite program: Jewish Women's Writings. Bring a short reading authored by any Jewish woman, including you, to share with the group at the Israeli-owned Sababa Grille on Murray Avenue.

And we're very excited about our March Ta'anit Ester program—a conversation with many of the rabbis in Pittsburgh (the ones who are women, that is) about where we are in 2010 with regard to women in the rabbinate.

JWC Board Retreat: July 2010

JWC board members (from L to R) Debbey Altman-Diamant, Barbara Baumann, Malke Frank, Adi Rapport, Pat Cluss and Mimi Reznik met in July for our annual all-day retreat to reflect on the past year—both personally and for the JWC—and to plan for the upcoming year. We agreed that being on the board adds to the fun of being a member of the JWC!



JWC PROGRAM CALENDAR: 5771 (2010-2011)

EVENT	DATE	TIME	PLACE	TOPIC
Tashlich	Sunday 9/12/10	11:00 AM	Nine Mile Run	--
Rosh Hodesh Cheshvan	Tuesday 10/12/10	6:30 PM	LZC	Friends, Food and Clear Intentions: potluck dinner
Rosh Hodesh Kislev	Sunday 11/7/10	7:00 PM	Sababa Grille	Jewish Women's Writings
Rosh Hodesh Tevet	Tuesday 12/7/10	7:15 PM	Riverview Towers	Hanukkah celebration
Rosh Hodesh Shvat	Thursday 1/6/11	Sent via e-mail	--	DIFY
Tu b'Shvat Seder	Sunday 1/23/11	6:30 PM	LZC	New Year of the Trees from a Woman's Perspective
Rosh Hodesh Adar 1	Monday 2/7/11	7:30 PM	Beth Shalom	With Beth Shalom Sisterhood
Rosh Hodesh Adar II	Sun to Mon 3/6 to 3/7/11	Sent via e-mail	--	DIFY
Ta'anit Ester	Thursday 3/17/11	7:30 PM	LZC	Conversation and Coffee with Pittsburgh's Women Rabbis
Rosh Hodesh Nisan	Tuesday 4/5/11	Sent via e-mail	--	DIFY
Pesach Seder	Thursday 4/21/11	6:00 PM	LZC	Celebrating Pesach from A Women's Perspective
Rosh Hodesh Iyar	TBD	7:30 PM	To be announced	
Celebration of RH Sivan and Shavuot	Sunday 6/5/11	7:30 PM	LZC	With Temple Sinai RH group
Rosh Hodesh Tammuz	Sat-Sun 7/2 to 7/3/11	Sent via e-mail	--	DIFY
Rosh Hodesh Av	Monday 8/1/11	Sent via e-mail	--	DIFY
Rosh Hodesh Elul	Tues-Wed 8/30 to 8/31/11	Sent via e-mail	--	DIFY

Project Keshet



JWC 5771 Tzedakah Project: Project Keshet

<http://projectkeshet.org/>

Founded in 1989, Project Keshet is the fastest growing advocacy and human rights organization in countries of the former Soviet Union, with a grassroots movement of 165 Jewish women's groups and more than 90 multi-ethnic coalitions of women spanning 11 time zones from countries including Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in the West to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in the East.

Project Keshet gives Jews in the former Soviet Union the opportunity to reclaim their heritage and to discover the power of community activism. They provide innovative leadership training for women and girls and social activist programming focused on domestic violence, prevention of human trafficking, and women's health issues, among others.

Programs include: 16 Days to End Domestic Violence, partnering with the American Bar Association in Moscow to provide support for participants in their advocate training program, resulting in legal assistance to more than 200 women who have been victims of domestic violence;

Project Keshet activists initiated a highly successful anti-trafficking seminar for college students, 'Life Abroad, Myths and Reality,' that has been replicated in dozens of communities throughout the former Soviet Union.

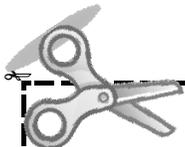
Mother-Daughter Retreats provide opportunities for Jewish learning, communication skills development and community activism training and more than 11,000 women have graduated from ORT Keshernet Computer Centers which provide computer and vocational training to women.



From Marina Constantinova, Project Keshet Director of "Women in Society," Tula, Russia:

"This year, Project Keshet was officially invited to bring the voices of Jewish women to the Russian Duma. We have had the opportunity to share a Jewish perspective on social issues ranging from human trafficking to domestic violence to women's health. Who could have imagined this?"

This year, may all of our voices be heard. Wishing you and your family a Happy and Healthy New Year!



Help the JWC support Project Keshet:

Here is my check for \$_____ for this year's JWC tzedakah project.

Member News



The JWC sends out a heartfelt *refuah shlaymah*—a healthy recovery—to longtime friend **Judith Finkelstein**. Our prayers are with you, Judith.

Condolences to **Carol Schubert** on the death of longtime companion Al Schubert. We are thinking about you, Carol.

From member **Julie Newman**: Our 18 year old son, Jake Klingensmith, just began college as a freshman at CMU in an interdisciplinary program combining humanities and architecture. Our younger son, Ben Klingensmith, will become a bar mitzvah on October 23rd at Rodef Shalom at 10:30AM. All JWC members are welcome (kiddush luncheon to follow).

Condolences go out to member **Pat Cluss** on the death in May of her father, John Cluss. A mazal tov also goes to Pat and husband Jeff on the engagement of their son, Josh Herman, to Gwen Gillespie.



[Thoughts, cont'd from p. 1] Women's Center, we have affected the life of our own larger Jewish community.

With body as spirit,

With community as the bigger dance,

Moving energy as authentic individuals

In ever larger communities.

....by Fanchon Shur

Sheyelamu kol mishalot libeynu l'tovah. May all the dreams of our heart be fulfilled.

L'Shanah Tova u'Metukah. May you and those you love be blessed with a good and sweet year.

The newsletter is one of the few things we print on paper and send to you through the mail. If you would prefer to receive your newsletter via e-mail in PDF format, just let Mimi Reznik know at mimireznik@msn.com.

Things You Might Want to Know:

SATELLITE BROADCAST FROM NYC'S 92nd STREET Y:

Temple Sinai sponsors a series of "remarkable broadcasts from the 92nd Street Y in Manhattan." The program on Thursday, December 16, 2010 is "**Miriam's Mosaic: Diverse Women of the Rabbinate.**" Temple Sinai literature says: Join us for a panel discussion of pioneering women from diverse backgrounds who have entered the clergy. Hear from Rabbi Dianne Cohler-Esses, Cantor Angela Buchdahl and Rabba Sara Hurwitz about the challenges they faced and what they bring with them from their Syrian, Asian-American and Orthodox backgrounds. Tickets are \$10 for T.S. members and \$15 for others. Times: 7:15 for a pre-broadcast text study/discussion with Pittsburgh Rabbis Sharyn Henry, Ami Hertz, Jessica Lockets, Barbara Symons, and Stephanie Wolfe and 8:15 for the program itself.

NEW CD CELEBRATING THE WOMEN OF THE TANAKH BY GALEET DARDASHTI:

The Jewish Chronicle on 9/9/10, in an article by Lee Chottiner, reported on the release of a new CD by Galeet Dardashti who this month released "The Naming," which pays tribute to the heroines of the Tanakh.

As the granddaughter of Yona Dardashti, the most renowned singer of Persian classical music in Iran in his day, and daughter of highly esteemed cantor Farid Dardashti, Middle Eastern vocalist and composer Galeet Dardashti is the first woman in her family to continue her family tradition of distinguished Persian and Jewish musicianship. Her new acoustic/electronic solo project, "The Naming," draws inspiration from the musical and cultural landscapes of the Middle East and some of the provocative yet unsung Biblical women who lived there.

The songs on the CD tell the story of why the brilliant Queen of Sheba shaved her legs, how the stunning Vashti laid down the line for her drunken husband, and how a mysterious witch spoke King Saul's doom and then served him a nice dinner. Dardashti's solo release and multimedia performance draws on the Persian music deep in her bones to transform the ghostly outlines of Biblical women into full-blown flesh-and-blood personalities, combing emotional Middle Eastern-inflected musical delivery with powerful storytelling.

See the Chronicle website (<http://thejewishchronicle.net>) and Galeet's own website (<http://galeetdardashti.com>) for details. Available at Amazon and other outlets.

Keeping Up with JWC Members: Barbara Shuman

I am continuing my own learning and spiritual growth through a new 2 year program sponsored by the Institute for Jewish Spirituality. "*Kivun*" focuses on various practices, including prayer, text study, meditation and yoga. The cohort meets twice a year for retreats, and there is distance learning in between, including weekly chevruta study with another participant in the program. I am finding the work meaningful and challenging.

It also supports my spiritual direction practice, in which I meet regularly with other seekers, listening to and supporting their experience of God. I am interested in working with a few more people, so if any JWC members would like to know more about Spiritual direction/guidance (or recommend me to friends) I would be happy to speak with them. *shana tova umetukah* - may you and your families be inscribed for a good and sweet year.

Barbara Shuman

The JWA was our tzedakah project in 5770. JWA's mission is to uncover, chronicle, and transmit to a broad public the rich history of American Jewish women. www.jwa.org.

Birth of Babette Deutsch: Poet, Novelist, Critic

September 22, 1895



Celebrated poet, novelist, critic, and editor Babette Deutsch was born on September 22, 1895. While still a student at Barnard College, Deutsch had her first poems published in magazines, and her first volume of poetry, *Banners*, was published only two years after she graduated. Many more volumes of poetry followed, including 1928's *Honey Out of A Rock*, which touched on varied biblical and Jewish themes. Deutsch also wrote a number of novels, including *A Brittle Heaven* (1926), *In Such a Night* (1927), and *The Mask of Silenus* (1933).

In addition to her work as a poet and novelist, Deutsch was a noted literary critic, as well as a writer of fiction and biographies for children. In 1958 she was elected to the National Academy of Arts and Letters, and in 1969 served as that organization's secretary. Deutsch was on the advisory board of the National Book Committee, chancellor for the Academy of American Poets, and a consultant for the Library of Congress.

Although Deutsch led a busy professional life, she also devoted much of her time to the Jewish community. Deutsch often worked with the Young Men's Hebrew Association, serving as a lecturer in their Poetry Center. Much of her poetry reflected her Jewish heritage, and her last three books of poetry all dealt with her anger at the horrors of the Holocaust and her efforts to make sense of such great tragedy. Deutsch died in 1982.

To learn more about Babette Deutsch, visit *Jewish Women: A Comprehensive Historical Encyclopedia* at <http://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/deutsch-babette>.

Sources: *Jewish Women in America: An Historical Encyclopedia*, pp. 328-329; *New York Times*, November 15, 1982.

Support the JWC with your 5771 dues:

\$18 _____ Reduced dues

\$36 _____ 1-year Basic Membership

\$54 _____ 1-year Supporting Membership

\$100 _____ 1-year Special Friend

I am adding \$_____ to my dues for this year's tzedakah project, Project Keshet.

Mail your check to: JWC, P.O. Box 81924, Pittsburgh, PA 15217

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[We're on the web:
www.jwcpgh.org **]**

TO:



The JWC Mission:

The Jewish Women's Center is a community of women of all backgrounds that provides educational opportunities and spiritual experiences rooted in Jewish values and feminist ideals. The JWC is a supportive environment for broadening our knowledge and involvement in Jewish life. The programs and resources of the JWC create opportunities for Jewish women's learning, leadership, spiritual growth and ritual practice.

