



Jewish Women's Center of Pittsburgh, Inc.  
Rosh Chodesh Kislev

We gather to welcome the new moon and the new month of Kislev. As Jewish women, we understand Rosh Chodesh as a symbol of renewal, as a woman's covenant, as a reminder of the cycles of nature, and as a marking of time. Rosh Chodesh is a recurring opportunity for spiritual development and for healing, for learning and for sharing.

As is our custom, let us introduce ourselves by our names and the names of our mothers and grandmothers.

Together:

ברוכה אתה, רוח העולם, שעשיתני אשה.

B'ru'cha at Yah, ru'ach ha'o'lam she'as'ta'ni i'sha  
Praised are you, Breath of Life, who made me a woman.

Gifts of the Month

Mat'not Hachodesh: Hodayah

As the new month approaches, we call to mind the gifts of the current month and give thanks.

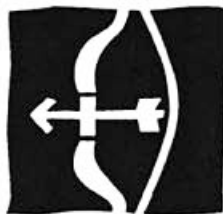
Together:

Witnessing

Cypresses point to the night,  
through clouds and beyond them.  
We follow them up the mountain  
to stake our site.

And now the blade of night  
gleams through the briars.  
We gather twigs for the fires:  
New Moon, old light.

We wait. The air is still.  
The leaf, the branch, the bark -  
our signposts in the darkness  
of the hill



Tonight we celebrate Kislev. This is a cold and dark time of the year. The sun is at its farthest from the earth. Our daylight is short. Nature rests, and winter is upon us. The astrological sign of Kislev is the Bow, Keshet. It reminds us of the root of Torah which is yud-resch-hey and means "to shoot." In Hebrew, the words for parents, horim, and teacher, morah, come from the same 3 root letters. Parents and teachers are the people who show us how to aim. In Kislev, we learn how to aim, to unearth the hidden wellspring, and find the light in our lives.

May our hearts be lifted and our spirits refreshed as we light this candle to welcome Rosh Hodesh Kislev.

Together:

Yehi ratzon sheyitchadesh aleynu  
Sheyitchadesh aleynu chodesh Kislev

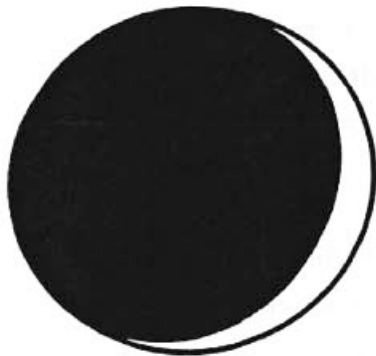
L'tovah v'livracha, l'sason ul'simcha, l'shalom v'achavah, rey'ut v'ahavah

La'avodah v'tzirah, parnasah v'chalkalah, l'shalvat hanefesh u'vrioot hagoof

L'chayim shel derech eretz v'ahavat torah, l'chayim sheyimalu bam  
mishalot libeynu l'tovah

Yehi ratzon sheyitchadesh aleynu  
Sheyitchadesh aleynu

Ken yehi ratzon



Together:

May the month of Kislev  
be a month of blessings:

blessings of goodness,  
blessings of joy,

peace and kindness,  
friendship and love

creativity, strength,  
serenity,

fulfilling work  
and dignity

satisfaction, success,  
and sustenance

physical health  
and radiance.

May truth and justice  
guide our acts,

and compassion  
temper our lives

that we may blossom  
as we age

and become  
our sweetest selves.

May it be so.

A New Moon/Full Moon Meditation

A Poem for Kislev

We come together at the new Moon  
To honor our silent energy  
To come out of the needed darkness  
The silence of Soul gathering

There is a quiet energy beginning with the New Moon  
and rising to the Full which  
reflects our capacity as women to  
become fully developed beings

There is a current we share with our Selves and  
our daughters  
and that current is a circle

And that circle has an inner spiral and an outer curve  
And this is a meditation  
to balance the inner voice  
with the outer movement.

We now honor the women in our lives whose yahrzeits are in the month of  
Kislev.

Together we recite Kiddush and Shehecheyanu:

נְבָרֵךְ אֶת עַיִן הַחַיִּים מְצַמֶּיחַת פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן, וְנִקְדַּשׁ אֶת רֹאשׁ הַחֹדֶשׁ בְּאַרְיֵגַת פְּתִילֵי חַיֵּינוּ לְתוֹךְ מִסְכַּת  
הַדּוֹרוֹת.

*N'va-rech et ein ha-cha-yim matz-mi-chat p'ri ha-ge-fen, un-ka-deish et rosh ha-cho-desh .  
ba-a-ri-gat p'ti-lei cha-yei-nu l'toch ma-se-chet ha-do-rot.*

Let us bless the Source of life that ripens fruit on the vine, as we hallow the *Rosh  
Chodesh* festival, weaving new threads into the tapestry of tradition.

נְבָרֵךְ אֶת מַעְיָן חַיֵּינוּ, שֶׁהַחַיִּים וְקִיָּמָנוּ וְהַגִּיעָנוּ לְזַמַּן הַזֶּה.

*N'va-rekh et ma-yan cha-yei-nu, she-he-chi-ya-nu, v'ki-a-ma-nu, v'hi-gi-a-nu laz-man ha-zeh.*

Let us bless the flow of life that revives us, sustains us, and brings us to this joyous moment,  
this holy time.

On this Rosh Hodesh, we remember, and we seek to be remembered in the  
ongoing history of our people.

### Personal Prayers

Your thoughts and hopes for the new month.

May the month of Kislev be . . . . .

Together:

Ken y'hi ratzon.  
May it be so.

Closing

Together:

Leisure

We had a hidden treasure of leisure  
gentle as the morning air,  
leisure of stories, kisses, tears,  
leisure of holidays,  
leisure of mama, grandma, and the aunts  
gliding in a boat of light,  
slowly floating  
in the small boat of peace  
with the moon and the heavenly bodies.

Zelda

We sing together:

אור חדש, מאור קדמון,  
תנשח נפשי אליך  
בשמי חדש כסלו.

Or chadash, ma'or kadmon,  
Ti'na'sei naf'she ai'le'cha  
Bish'mei chodesh, bish'mei chodesh  
Bish'mei chodesh Kislev



New moon, ancient light  
May my spirit rise to you  
in Kislev's sky

Together:

Chodesh Tov! A Good Month

A Month of Health, Peace, and Fulfillment!

## Sources

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**Hannah** The Second Book of the Maccabees records cases of pious Jews who chose to die rather than submit to the Syrian Greeks. A celebrated mother, Hannah, expressed unfaltering faith in God as she was forced to watch her seven sons die for refusing to bow to an idol, and then was killed herself.

Hannah's martyrdom raises the issue of supreme sacrifice for religion. We might ask ourselves where we would draw that line today. Hannah also calls upon us to hold in our hearts those mothers in every generation who must give up their children to war. We are reminded in particular about mothers in Israel today.

### **The Four "Women of Light"**

*According to legend...*

**Sarah Imeynu** (our foremother) lit candles at the beginning of Shabbat. Miraculously, the flame burned throughout the entire week, lighting the tents of Abraham and Isaac.

**Rebecca Imeynu** inherited the task of lighting these candles when Sarah died. Because Rebecca was also a righteous woman, her candlelight shined throughout the entire week, as Sarah's had.

**Queen Esther** was known as the Ayelet Hashaḥar (the morning star) who brought a bright, rekindled spirit to the Jews after the dark night of suffering at the time of King Ahashuaros.

**Deborah** was a wise and important judge who lived in the twelfth century BCE. In the Torah, Deborah is referred to as the "Woman of Lapidot." In Hebrew, lapid means torch or flame, and so the Talmud refers to Deborah as a "woman of flames." A contemporary midrash

teaches that Deborah made candlewicks that lit before fire ever touched them; the candles were illuminated from the light inside of Deborah, which grew as she grew.<sup>2</sup>

The Four "Women of Light" remind us that each one of us can share her light without diminishing it. They also invite us to remember the female ancestors in our own families every time we light the Shabbat and Hanukkah candles.

